
WORK IN PROGRESS

by

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for Lisa

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Foreword

“This is the commencement of a recording made by Cliff Holden on December 12, 1992.
It is my birthday and I am 73 years old. ”

It is now seven years since I made the first of the recordings which have been transcribed and edited to make the text of this book. I was persuaded to make these recordings by my friend, the art historian, Joseph Darracott. We had been friends for over forty years and finally I accepted that the project which he was proposing might be feasible and would be worth attempting. And so, in talking about my life as a painter, I applied myself to the discipline of working from a list of questions which had been prepared by Joseph. During our initial discussions about the book Joseph misunderstood my idea, which was to engage in a live dialogue with the cut and thrust of question and answer. The task of responding to questions which had been typed up in advance became much more difficult to deal with because an exercise such as this lacked the kind of stimulus which a live dialogue would have given to it. Sadly Joseph died before he could see the book completed but it was entirely due to his initiative and his encouragement that the book came to be written at all.

I have no scholastic ambitions and I had hoped to present the material from the transcriptions without too many alterations. However, in adjusting the spoken word to the printed word a certain amount of editing was necessary and, while I have left in place many repetitions, which serve to emphasize important points, I have also added a number of emendations and amplifications, often in the form of letters, quotations and reviews.

Perhaps I need to say that this book is only biographical in so far as it is concerned with my art life and my ideas. I have talked about my approach to painting, printing and designing and I have discussed the problem of teaching art to students. But I have also wanted to rectify various lies and distortions which have arisen over the years since the disbanding of the Borough Group. As it stands now, this page of history has been written by people who either had no direct access to Bomberg or had little understanding of his intentions.

In the words of David Bomberg: "It is to this page of history that such contributions as I and my followers may make after me through the approach to mass that there should be appended a footnote - and left to posterity to judge whether it was of significance or not. "

C.H.
Hasslas, Sweden
7th March, 1999

1

My Need to Paint

How shall I begin? It is a long story, beginning when I was a young child. In spite of being very clever at making what was called art at school, I felt intuitively that this activity was not art. At the time, I didn't know what art was. I also reacted against doing art at this stage because my ideas were fluctuating between religious fervour, political commitment and philosophical attitudes that made me ask: "What is art for and what use is it in society?" I had the conviction that one should produce food for people to eat and goods that were of use. I therefore turned to agriculture and to politics. I didn't realize at the time that the development and cultivation of the spirit was preferable and, in fact, not only desirable but essential to the well-being of both the individual and society.

When I was a child my family moved from Lancashire to Yorkshire and then settled in Cheshire where we attended the Congregational Church every Sunday in Wilmslow. By the time I was 11 or 12 I was also joining my father at Quaker meetings and I came to sympathize with his commitment to Socialism and the Trade Union movement. At the age of 13 I was a Communist, which is about the right age for that sort of commitment, although I confess that I flirted with it again just before the war. My tendency from the age of 13 to the age of 19 or 20 was towards being useful to society and therefore I was gravitating from Socialism to Communism and from Quakerism to Pacifism. Later on I was to throw it all in for Anarchism. But at the age of sixteen I was under pressure from my father to choose the kind of job which people call sensible. Before I could make my own choice, I was offered and accepted an office job in an Auctioneer and Estate Agents office. The Headmaster from my school found me this position and I was considered to have made a good start in life. But after nine months, I was dismissed without notice for making chaos of the files and disturbing the boss while he fumbled his secretary.

In the years when I was growing up my family always had land and livestock. I took an interest in my father's work as a farmer and I had a love for animals. So my thoughts turned to veterinary science but I failed my exams for university. After a few months loafing around I managed to get to Agricultural College and ended up with a Diploma for Poultry Keeping. In 1939 I got a job on a chicken farm in Dunsfold, near Godalming which was run by two Irish brothers, Peter and Richard Nugent. Mr. Dick, as we called him, turned to politics after the war. He was knighted and subsequently became Minister for Agriculture in Margaret Thatcher's government. He ended his career in the House of Lords as Lord Nugent.

When I was living in Surrey I met an artist who ran a shop in Guildford called 'Things of Beauty and Utility,' which is rather curious because later on in my time as an artist I repudiated beauty and things of utility. The artist's name was J. Selwyn Dunn. He had a studio in Haslemere and it was called 'The Kelmscott Studio' in tribute to William Morris. He had worked with Morris as a boy, together with his father.

In 1940 I was running a pacifist community farm, called Crossways Farm, in Cradley near Malvern. This farm had been bought by a Quaker called John Jenkins and the project was intended to assist military aged people who were conscientious objectors and who were being discriminated against by employers. The farm was little more than a peasant holding with a cottage and a number of out-houses which were in need of repair. We had four cows, one sow,

three piglets, thirty three hens and a horse. Many prominent people were our house guests including the popular radio philosopher Dr. C.E.M. Joad, who used to visit us for weekends. At the same time I attended philosophy lectures at the W.E.A. in Worcester. When I eventually decided to abandon the Community Farm project, Mr. Jenkins chose a couple to take my place and their names were Nommie and Harry Durell. Harry was an architect and Nommie was an art teacher who proved to be an acquaintance of Herbert Read and, later, she organised the National Exhibitions of Childrens Art in London.

My ideas evolved slowly towards anarchism and, during a stay at an anarchist community near Stroud, I came in contact with a Hegelian philosopher who had met Prince Peter Kropotkin and Leo Tolstoy. I began to read people like Dostoevsky, Turgenev, Bakunin, P. J. Proudhon, E. Malatesta, Kant, Hegel and Nietzsche. I had moved a considerable distance in my reading away from people like Thomas Hardy, William Cobbett, Henry Williamson, Richard Jeffries and Theodore Watts-Dunton. My innate love for nature had been fostered originally during my schooldays by a very remarkable teacher J.C.W. Houghton (who we used to refer to affectionately as J.C.) and these writers bolstered my enjoyment of nature and gave me encouragement in my lifestyle as a tramp and a gypsy. As well as following this direction in my reading, I also went out deliberately to meet people like H. G. Wells, Sir Richard Ackland, Julian Simmonds, Simon Watson Taylor, E. L. T. Messens, Herbert Read, George Orwell and Dr. Alex Comfort. My commitment to Pacifism gave way to Anarchism and finally to Anarcho-Syndicalism.

I led a romantic life at this time playing by turn the role of tramp, gypsy and political agitator. This led to organizing strikes and I gradually became more and more involved in a militant anarchism whose purpose was to establish a society based on anarcho-syndicalist principles. To this end I eventually found myself one of ten members of the editorial board of Freedom Press and we produced a weekly called 'War Commentary' which eventually became 'Freedom.'

In 1943, three of us - Tom Brown, Ken Hawkes and myself - broke away from Freedom Press because we had huge differences of opinion on how to organize towards revolution. We founded another paper called 'Direct Action,' but at this point, after some months, the Spanish and Hungarian anarchists postulated a much increased militant attitude. When I contemplated the possibility that I had to involve myself in the economic structure of society plus a militancy which increasingly demanded an obedience to group activity so that one could be ordered to kill, I felt that to involve myself in this way would not be compatible with my conscience. I therefore resigned from the Anarchist Federation. Here is a draft of my letter of resignation.

July 1944

Dear Comrades,

I regret that I have not written this earlier, and yet I almost wish that there was no necessity to write at all - but there is no point in sentiment.

I wish you to acknowledge my resignation from the A.F. The motives for my resignation at this juncture are in no way connected with the recent "factional" strife and it is not designed to protest against or further any particular viewpoint. Unlike some members I regard resignation over such issues as petty and trivial, and I can no longer regard people with such tendencies as being serious in their intentions towards the movement.

Unlike Sonia I do not conceive it to be a duty, to myself or any other person past or present, to belong to the movement - I need a purpose and a certain naive enthusiasm. My lack of enthusiasm I put down to the following:

1. the apparent inability of the present circus, which is the A.F. as now constituted, to form an organic movement or even an organic nucleus.
2. lack of faith in any other body of people forming such a movement.
3. lack of faith in attaining an anarchist society or, even if attained, whether such a society is desirable.

It can be argued that possibly this is a rationalization to cover my laziness. But in any event according to my own conception of what a militant should be I cannot further conscientiously participate in the activities of the A.F.

In retrospect I had personal problems which I was unable to work out through my involvement in religion, politics and philosophy. This was the background to my frustration and it was frustration which produced the need to become a painter.

By now I had read Kant and Hegel but then I became acquainted with the philosophy of Bishop Berkeley. I met various people in the cafes and pubs of Soho where we would discuss these philosophical ideas and a friend presented me with a copy of the complete works. Then I came to a point, after a lot of religious and political activity, where I had a psychological and emotional breakdown which resulted in me staying in bed, reading books for a period of between nine months and a year without any other activity or making contact with people. During this time, I kept asking myself what should I do with my life? I must do something. I must justify my existence; I must create. So I began to paint. Then all my real problems started.

The decision to paint was a very traumatic moment, equalled only by the despair that I had experienced a year before. Having decided to do it and having started to do it, the problem then was how to do it - what kind of direction should I take? What kind of stimulus was on hand?

I had always wanted to do this as a child and had been deprived of doing it not only by my own outlook, but also by my parents, teachers and friends, including a number of architects and other artists who I knew. These last proved, in retrospect, to be academics in their approach to painting and, in fact, were non-artists. That is to say they were illustrators, letterers and painters supplying the market with landscapes and portraits. In fact they did everything which had a practical application. What was being ignored was the image, the mood and the poetic content.

As a small child I liked drawing and painting and was considered to be "good at art." I wanted to do it. I cannot remember my early childhood drawing - my recollection only goes back to the age of 10 when I started to do the Royal Drawing Society examinations completing six of them with Honours by the age of 15 years. I was the only child in the school to do this. It was not until many years later that I realized that this kind of drawing had no relation to what I was to come to understand as 'art proper.'

These drawings were of no significance and of no value. They only indicated that I had talent but were of no consequence in the world of art - they were produced by a non-art activity. In spite of parents, teachers and friends being proud of my achievements, in what they thought was art, they persuaded me to forget art unless I took a sensible practical approach which would give me a living. This meant, of course applied art or hand-craft such as illustration or lettering,

both of which I hated. So, although according to my teachers and friends I had plenty of talent, this was useless because I had no direction and above all I had no need at that age to do art.

The need developed slowly and became much greater when I had been through the process of grappling with ideas to do with religion, politics and philosophy. In other words, the need was to find myself. To find myself I needed direction and to find direction I needed a mentor. I needed a master.

For several years I had been looking at the Royal Academy shows which I always found disappointing but without knowing why. To me they were boring and meaningless and I dismissed the shows as rubbish. The London Group however was a trifle more exciting but, again, I reacted negatively to most of the paintings. But, every now and again, there appeared one or two paintings by a man called Bomberg. I had never heard of him. I knew nothing about him, but these were the paintings that I responded to and I felt I had an affinity with. So I inquired amongst my friends who was this Bomberg and some of them knew him - or rather knew of him - but dismissed him as being of no importance what-so-ever.

Coincidentally, I attended lectures on philosophy at the City Literary Institute in London. This was an attempt to break out of my depression and to continue my search for truth which I had already started during the early 1940's, when I was running the pacifist community farm near Malvern. My interest in philosophy continued at the City Lit. and it was there that the most extraordinary coincidence occurred. The curriculum listed the name of a painter called David Bomberg who was teaching at the same Literary Institute and this was in the year 1944. I immediately contacted Bomberg and enrolled as a student. Thus, at the age of 25, my apprenticeship with my Master began.

What I cannot remember is when Bomberg and I began to discuss the philosophy which motivated our activity. It seemed to me at the time that I introduced Bomberg to Berkeley and especially to chapters called the 'New Theory of Vision,' but I have since heard that Bomberg was probably acquainted with Berkeley much earlier. So that what emerges is a most extraordinary coincidental linking of two minds, my own and Bomberg's, going in the same direction with the same philosophical background. Philosophy acted as a stimulation and justification for the kind of non-verbal research that we were engaged in.

I never had an art college training but I followed Bomberg wherever he was teaching, never taking part in the school curriculum, but taking advantage of Bomberg's unorthodox teaching methods and making use of the space and the model.

2

The Borough Group

The Borough Group was started in 1946. The ideas of the Group arose out of conversations between myself and Bomberg during the years 1944 and 1945. I had immediately recognized that Bomberg's painting, his idea of teaching his practice and his attitude to the creative act were unique in the world and not only in England. It was proved later that Bomberg not only anticipated the American influences of Tachism, Action Painting and the New Expressionism which reached England in the middle fifties, but also that his ideas were more profound and fundamental.

When I first met Bomberg, at the City Literary Institute in 1944, he was teaching drawing to a group of ladies. Bomberg told me that he was also teaching part-time at Dagenham School of Art and that there was a revolt of the students and staff against his unorthodox teaching methods, especially concerning his attitude to drawing and lithography. (It should be noted that before being an art student Bomberg had served his apprenticeship in lithography.) Leading this revolt were two typical but intensely conservative students, Dorothy Mead and Edna Mann. Gradually they began to understand what Bomberg believed in, producing a profound change of heart so that they became fervent disciples of Bomberg. When he was forced to leave Dagenham, they followed him to London where Bomberg introduced them to me and they enrolled at the City Literary Institute. From there, in the following year, 1945, Bomberg secured a part-time teaching job (two days and two evenings a week) at the Borough Polytechnic. He suggested that we all follow him there, which was quite an extraordinary event. We didn't take part in the ordinary curriculum of the art school, but only went along to Bomberg's classes. Thus this nucleus of three people became instrumental in spreading Bomberg's ideas, by recruiting students from other art schools and from the pubs and cafes of Soho and bringing them to the Borough Polytechnic.

To establish the date at which I first became a student of Bomberg and to indicate how much confidence he had in my commitment to art, I can cite a letter of reference which he wrote for me in 1947, when I was applying to rent some accommodation in Maida Vale.

41 Queens Gate Mews,
Gloucester Road,
London SW7

7th February 1947

Dear Sir,

I have been asked by my student Clifford Holden for a reference in regard to his tenancy of an unfurnished apartment in your property - 74 Randolph Avenue, Maida Vale.
I am Holden's Art Master at the Borough Polytechnic, Borough Road, S.E.1., which he has been regularly attending part-time for day and evening sessions. I have found him a very

disciplined person both in regard to his studies and reliable in every way inside and outside the Borough Polytechnic.

I esteem Mr. Holden as a student of great promise and as an artist with some achievement already.

We have been known to one another for some two years and during that time he has shown himself well meriting my esteem and confidence in him.

Yours faithfully,
David Bomberg

When Bomberg managed to get more part-time work at the Bartlett School of Architecture he would take his students out to various locations and we joined him there as well. The architectural students plus myself, Mead and Mann worked with Bomberg on outdoor sites in the City of London and from casts at the Victoria and Albert Museum. When we worked from the casts in the Victoria and Albert museum I made many drawings of Michelangelo's David. Apart from using the models in the studio, we were also encouraged to go out and draw and paint the architecture nearby. We spent many months in Westminster Abbey and St. Paul's Cathedral as well as at sites along the River Thames. I myself made at least twenty paintings from the roof of the Borough Polytechnic, which now has the grand name of South Bank University. Others working on the roof at that time included Peter Richmond, Edna Mann and Dorothy Mead.

Teaching, like painting, was a total activity for Bomberg. Richard Michelmore, one of his students (and not a painter but an architect), has said that Bomberg spoke of the grandeur of the whole; of the importance of the parts only as an amplification of the complete statement. That may well be, but I think Michelmore completely misunderstood him. It may well be the case in architecture where the amplification can lead to ornamentation, but in the painted image the complete statement needs no amplification. It is complete. The point of completion is the beginning of another statement and therefore of another painting.

Bomberg often simplified the history of art into two approaches; those painters that approached the form, building the parts to the whole and those who worked from the whole to the parts. His sympathies were with the latter. Never did he think in terms of appropriate parts. The parts had a place only in so far as they were an integral ingredient in the structure of the image. Bomberg's teaching did not pursue an artistic method or embrace a complete aesthetic; it was an approach capable of endless development.

He regarded himself as a man breaking virgin soil. He threw in dung instead of artificial fertilizers and not unnaturally a lot of weeds came up together with the strong plants. The question of whether Bomberg stressed drawing from the figure is something of a red herring. Bomberg never actually stressed drawing from the figure as such. For him the human figure and the apple were perhaps the most difficult problems the draughtsman could approach. From 1912 to 1920, Bomberg had made a large number of figure compositions but, later on, he abandoned this type of composition in favour of landscapes, portraits and flower paintings. I can only think of three paintings by Bomberg of the nude figure. We, as students, worked mainly from the model because the model was available and this excited Bomberg because he regarded the human figure as being so complex. Every problem the draughtsman could encounter was contained in the human figure. But it was also contained in the apple.

Bomberg also encouraged us to make small models of clay or wire and work with light shadows so that we simulated dancing figures or figures in procession or bell-ringers or boxers fighting. He suggested that we might take any object and change it into something else in the way he once did using cushions which he changed into a row of sleeping men. He also encouraged us to change the motif; for example, to start off with a still life in a vase and change it into a chicken, change it into two chickens fighting, and then perhaps change it again into two figures embracing in a kiss. He taught us to take a painting which was of little value and turn it upside down, as the Cubists did, and carefully change the value of all the colours - that is to change the colour of each brush stroke, which was a very tedious discipline. What he meant was that by turning the painting you changed the gravitational pull. The forms regained vitality partly because of this and partly because you change the colour of the brush stroke while working towards a new identification of subject.

In working from the model Bomberg encouraged the students to engage in a few tricks which were contrary to the static attitudes of the academics. We would walk around the model and approach from different angles and perspectives. It was recognized that nature was not static and neither should the painter be static. It was in movement that the assessment of the form was possible.

Sometimes the model was spot-lighted as by the sun, sometimes by a hard overall light and sometimes it was completely in the dark. The painting was from light to dark and dark to light. In this way both the model and the landscape were viewed as nature in constant flux and change. The subject changed, the painter himself moved and the light was in constant movement - which was just the opposite from the way Monet worked before 1890. He would go to his motif and, if he became ten minutes late, he would go back in his taxi without putting a mark on the canvas because what he wanted was to establish his landscape in one moment of time. We worked in the exact opposite way. We agreed with Bomberg that the eye was not only a feeble servant of the other senses but a highly specialized servant, dangerous in this specialization and given to lying. Landscape painting was a question of finding an image, not of a camera eye view but a wide angled panorama which could be arrived at through the sense of touch and movement.

Bomberg's contribution was unique. He did not imitate the Cubists or the Fauves but was already critical in his attitude both with words and in paint, just as he became critical of his own attitude between 1914 and 1920 which led to the gradual evolution of his later contributions. These were not diametrically opposed to his earlier ideas, as most critics seemed to think; the seeds of his later period already existed in the earlier time.

Bomberg's roots were through Giotto, Cimabue, Massaccio, Michelangelo and all the way through to Rembrandt and Cezanne, with Piero de la Francesca, Goya, Velasquez and Titian on the side (but still very important). I also tread this path but I have come to the conclusion - a very exciting conclusion - that the later path started with Turner and came to France through Delacroix, Van Gogh, the late Monet and, finally, through Cezanne who was the father to Bomberg as Bomberg was the father to me. This was the path that Bomberg trod and the remnants of the Borough Group have tried to continue along the same path.

It is a sad indictment of the critics and the art historians that they have continued to lump Bomberg with the Vorticists when he continually rejected the advances of Wyndham Lewis and when he never joined their group or contributed to any of their exhibitions. Later, against his will, he was included in the Vorticist show at the Tate in 1956 where he was represented by one picture. Vorticism was a convenient label. The name of 'Vorticism' was invented and

propagated by Wyndham Lewis and it was this label which caught on with the critics because Wyndham Lewis was a much more prolific writer than he was a painter. Nobody in fact knew what Vorticism meant and as Lewis himself said: "Vorticism, in fact, was what I, personally, did, and said, at a certain period."

Superficially Bomberg's early and later periods could hardly appear to be more different. The only person, apart from myself, who seems to have recognized the similarity in approach and his continuing pre-occupation with particular ideas, is the writer Christopher Neve in his book *The Unquiet Landscape* (Faber & Faber, 1990, pp.149-158). Neve recognized this when he said (p.152): "From the mid-1920's, instead of imposing his will on his surroundings, he began to watch for the humane spirit in the landscape and tried to let it impose on him."

Bomberg was a great teacher and during his lifetime his influence was felt by many people who were never close to him as we were in the Borough Group. There are only two painters - Kossoff and Auerbach - who made a reputation since then and who the critics have connected with the name of David Bomberg.

Auerbach remembered his master Bomberg only many years after his death when it was respectable to have known the master. At a tender age Auerbach was already wise enough not to put all his eggs in one basket and opted for the security of the establishment via St. Martins and the Royal College of Art. Later this paid off by helping him to find well paid teaching jobs which is something that Bomberg himself could never achieve.

When compared to my lengthy contact with Bomberg from 1944 to 1951 (when we met during long periods almost every day), both Kossoff and Auerbach had a very short acquaintance - two evenings a week at the Borough, in Kossoff's case only between 1950 and 1952 and in Auerbach's case between 1948 and 1952. This is corroborated by Frances Spalding when she reviewed their exhibition at the Royal College of Art. She points out that the RCA can claim only partial responsibility for the success of their former students and she agrees with Lynda Morris who astutely observes in the catalogue that Kossoff and Auerbach were more influenced by their two evenings a week under Bomberg at the Borough Polytechnic than by their seven years as full time students at St. Martins and the RCA.

Bomberg regarded Auerbach as something of a joke, a boy of talent and taste following the fashions of art. I remember Auerbach at the age of 16 and 17 making imitations of Klee and Braque in a very decorative manner. Auerbach has been quoted as saying he was taught by Bomberg but not influenced by his practice. This, of course, is nonsense because it was precisely his practice that Bomberg taught and this was what marked him out from all other teachers. But the influence on Auerbach was not so much Bomberg as the Borough Group.

It was the ideas generated by the Borough Group which influenced people like Kossoff and Auerbach but what Kossoff and Auerbach did as a result was a misinterpretation of what the Borough Group were doing. One can not connect their work to Bomberg except indirectly through us. Auerbach lifted the idea of the thick paint and reduced it to a gimmick which he continued to follow, not realizing that paintings can be made with thick paint or thin paint. Because the thick paint obviously prevented him from working directly from the landscape, out in the open air and in the nature, he was reduced, like Sickert, to working from the small sketch and the photograph which was the opposite way of working to that of Bomberg. In fact, Auerbach is on record as being a great admirer of Sickert - which is, of course, more his idiom - not forgetting that Bomberg's teacher was Sickert and Bomberg hated him all his life.

In their thickness both Kossoff and Auerbach are more related to the work of Bengt Lindstrom from Paris or Karel Appel from Belgium. In his images Kossoff has the same element of caricature which one finds in the paintings by the American, Wilhelm De Kooning, and both

of them, in their brush strokes, have more in common with the Dane, Asgar Jorn. All of them have been successful and they all lack any relation to the ideas expounded by Bomberg.

In those days, we all played around and waded in an abundance of paint. We painted thick. There were many side issues and romantic ideas generated during the period of the Borough Group. For example, Peter Richmond went even further than Auerbach. Peter had the notion that to be a good artist one should emulate Michelangelo and, therefore, he did not wash and he used the same old paint-covered clothes and a dirty old mac which was his habitual uniform. Both Peter Richmond and I were using thick paint and dropping it on the floor, much to the annoyance of Mr. Patrick, who was the head of the art department at the Borough Polytechnic and who nearly had us thrown out because of this. We were there very much on sufferance because we took no part in the school's curriculum and it was clear to everyone that we were only there to take advantage of the facilities and the model.

The reason why the Borough Group used dark paint was not because of any angst or depression but because we could not afford to buy the vermilions, the yellows, the reds and the wonderful blues - all of which were far too expensive. We also worked on boards and when we had no money we worked on both sides, which was thought by many people to be very strange. But years later, I saw that Raoult had worked watercolours on both sides of the paper and this, of course, once a painter is established, is acceptable. They were exhibited in museums, not hanging on the wall, but sticking out from the wall with glass on both sides of the frame so that you saw two paintings, one on each side.

There were many other painters around Bomberg at the time but they didn't join the Borough Group. People like Edvardo Paolozzi, Joe Tilson, Max and Gustav Metzger, Karl Weschke and many others. But they quickly drifted away, either because the criticism was too severe or because the ideas that they were being introduced to were contrary to the kind of direction they wished to take.

The significance of Bomberg as a teacher was first of all that he taught his practice. Most other teachers taught the practice or the ideas of others - or what they thought was the practice of others. Not having personal contact, they could only guess at the motivation. His interpretation of the history of art was totally different to most of the teachers in the art schools. We both hated that stream through the history of art which includes Leonardo da Vinci, Raphael, Ingres, David, Messonier and all the academic permutations which persisted in what many termed 'classical art.' Of course there were many other painters, notably in Paris, that taught their practice, for example, Andre Lhote and Fernand Leger. In the case of Leger, nearly everyone who came out of his studio merely produced imitation Legers. The difference was that Bomberg didn't try to impose his will on the students. Instead he tried to follow the direction the student was taking and he endeavoured to indicate to the student the character of the idea the student was developing and of which the immature student had no concept of. He was able to perceive an idea which was slowly maturing as the student worked and he was able to assist the student to bring it forward to fruition. He was able to do this because he recognized that a student's creative potential and youthful vitality was frustrated and distorted by his inexperience and his immature critical faculty. The student invariably destroyed his vital image in favour of an image he recognized which by definition was banal and academic.

Bomberg not only taught his practice, but was deeply committed to a collaboration with the student on equal terms. In Bomberg's case, unlike, for example, Rubens or Henry Moore, he, as the master, did not impose an idea on the student who was then required to execute it. It was

much more a fusion of ideas. It was Bomberg's maturity, his long experience and therefore his judgment, which enabled him to recognize an emerging idea produced through the student's blind, frenzied activity. Activity alone will not produce an idea. To begin the journey, you have to have a direction pointed out. You have to be urged to continue the journey and at arrival at one's destination - that is the idea - the situation has to be recognized as an idea and then, of course, the idea - the whole situation - has to be explored and amplified and brought to a fruition.

Most of Bomberg's teaching was in order to stimulate and the stimulation went hand in hand with the attempt to develop one's judgment. He thought that this was the only thing that one should teach. He hardly ever talked about his contemporaries except to disparage them, but his greatest loves of masters in art were Michelangelo and Cezanne, whom he spoke of frequently. Otherwise he would turn outside painting, drawing and sculpture with references to the Bible and Shakespeare. He was very well read and could quote extensively.

Charles Spencer interviewed Bomberg in London during 1953 and in Spain (August, 1955) and he has written, in an article called 'Memories of Bomberg' (London Magazine, 1967, pp. 30-48), that he found Bomberg was unable to express himself in words. This was a typical example of the critic's arrogance and insensitivity to the non-verbal problems of painting. Bomberg's gift for language was demonstrated later, when his war poems were published (in a limited edition of 250 called *Poems and Drawings from the First World War by David Bomberg* by the Gillian Jason Gallery, London, 1992). It is acknowledged in a note which is attached to 'The Bomberg Papers' (X - A Quarterly Review, Volume One, Number Three, June 1960, pp. 183-190) that "Bomberg left behind him an accumulation of manuscripts and papers of one kind and another which altogether constitute a testament of the highest importance for those interested in the work (and in the mind behind the work) of this painter."

Every painter has difficulties speaking about painting but this does not mean that they are inarticulate. Some of the best writings about art problems are made by painters, for example Michelangelo, Cezanne, Van Gogh, Delacroix and Gauguin. It should be obvious that painters know about painting whereas critics and art historians babble words so effortlessly that one suspects that they hope, by these means, to disguise their ignorance.

Bomberg rarely showed any examples of his own work to his students but, if a special problem came along which he wished to illustrate, he would take me to his studio and bring out a single painting on its own for me to contemplate. He did this deliberately because he didn't want us to imitate his work; he once said that, speaking generally, art endeavours to reveal what is true and therefore needs to be free. Furthermore, all things said regarding art are subject to contradiction and it was these contradictions in Bomberg's teaching which frustrated many students. It was very difficult to find out in which particular direction he was heading. However, once I understood that the contradictions finally revealed a truth, then it was much easier to accept the kind of path he was encouraging us to tread.

It was the critical faculty that Bomberg sought to develop. In teaching it was his main plank. He recognized that it was impossible to teach art and all that one could do was to assist the student to find a direction and, through value judgment, to find himself. He believed that he could bypass the tedious academic approach, so that a student might be able to fulfil his creative potential, without having to first spend the next twenty years trying to forget all that he had learnt.

In 1946 Edna Mann was awarded a scholarship to the Royal College of Art but she left after a year because of the opposition to Bomberg's ideas at the College and the consequent conflict of loyalties. Bomberg's enthusiasm was very different to any other teachers one

encountered. His whole life was art. His was a total commitment to art. He demanded a total loyalty. He recognized that no one wanted to get experience from the experience of others, or to get experience from other people's experiments. He thought that every artist should make his own experiments. The experience defines itself during the act and process of painting. He would explain this as follows. If straight away you recognize the image which you have painted then you can be sure that you are imitating yourself or somebody else. Because you know what it is, it does not come as a surprise or a shock. Therefore it is in the development of the student's critique where the master can most crucially help the student towards the creative act. He strove to bring out the personality. He taught the importance of integrity. To quote Bomberg, he said that "there is inherent in the structure of moral values an integrity which performs but does not think. It will help sustain strength, the seat of which may be located in the mind, it cannot be seen but we know it is there, because it is operative. Truth radiates from it. It becomes fine art when it is integrated in form." He also questioned, as I do, why we tend to accept one idea in art and reject another.

I came across a note which I made in 1946 when I was trying to formulate some words about what the Borough Group was all about. I wrote: "Dissatisfied with the tradition of academic art and unable to subscribe to the purely formal preoccupation's of abstract painting, the Group consider it necessary for the artist to enter into an almost mystical union with the subject of his painting and to perceive with all his being a sense of its mass. In the words of Bomberg, the Group aims 'to make more articulate the spirit in the mass'." However, constructive use of form and colour is not to be neglected, as there can be no worthwhile painting that is not founded on design and structure.

Together our agreed purpose was to establish a closely integrated group to work out the ideas that neither Bomberg himself nor any other single artist could hope to realize in their lifetime. The Group would provide a platform for furthering these ideas and presenting them to the public while, at the same time, it would be a vehicle to establish Bomberg's students as professionals. The foundation members of the Group in 1946 were Cliff Holden, Peter Richmond, Dorothy Mead and Edna Mann. David Bomberg did not want to take an active part in the Group and refused to be a member or to take part in exhibitions, preferring the role of teacher and mentor. I put a lot of time, commitment and effort into trying to arrange exhibitions and in working out our policy and strategy. Because I was the most active in conceiving and fostering the Group, Bomberg proposed that I should be the first President and this was unanimously adopted.

The first statement of our aims was written initially by me but was then subject to changes and editing by Bomberg and the Group, before we all agreed and approved it. The first statement of our aims was printed as a foreword to the catalogue of the Borough Group's first exhibition.

'Approach to Painting'

THE APPROACHES TO PAINTING are as diverse as modes of living. Each age produces a set of habits, manners, and morals which are ever changing and transitory. There is no law except that demanded to maintain social equilibrium.

IN PAINTING there is no law except that there is no painting without form. Form is the language.

MODERN BRITISH PAINTERS, having departed from the pale shadows of the so-called academic tradition, where the smooth surface took precedence over form and was the measure of good painting: on the one hand, impressionism still leaves its mark amongst tonal painters who create a mood which has little relation to the form on which it must depend. On the other hand, there are the followers of the school of Paris whose exquisite textures are superimposed upon weak imitative forms to aid the merely decorative quality. This kind of painting culminates logically in tapestry, which had a functional value in the middle ages, but cannot by its very nature contribute anything unique in the magic language which is painting.

THIS GROUP is experimenting with an idiom which we feel is capable of capturing the deeper and more profound aspects of life. The language in which we are endeavouring to express ourselves is understood only by a very small number of people, and the purpose of this exhibition is to broaden that understanding. We know that this work is anathema in the eyes of contemporary tonal painters because it does not approximate to the refined surface quality of their own paintings. And in its naked structure we are certain our work would be rejected from any exhibition in England.

OUR APPROACH is founded on the belief that there is in nature a truth and a realism which the usual contemporary approach to painting is unable to convey. The very technique and the methods of acquiring that technique seem to be calculated as if on purpose to avoid this deeper and more elemental truth. This approach of our group aims at spanning the great gap between the real experiences of our life and the achievements of contemporary painting. The endeavour in all our work is to express ourselves clearly and sincerely and if we fail it is not because our principles and objects are wrong but that we ourselves require more and more experience.

IT IS HOPED that our work may not only serve to bring to the knowledge of people the wealth and richness of life, but also make them conscious that this depth is in themselves.

The first exhibition was finally arranged in June 1947 at the Archer Gallery, thanks to the kindness and sympathy of Dr. Morris who owned and ran the Gallery. The works shown were mostly rejects from the London Group. Owing to a misunderstanding made by Dr. Morris, Allen Stokes had one work included in this show although he was never at any time a member of the Group. Just before this showing the Group had enlarged to include Lilian Bomberg and Christine Kamienieska. It was decided to hold an annual show at other places whenever and wherever possible.

The next exhibition was held in the same year at the Everyman Cinema, Hampstead, with all the above members taking part with the exception of Kamienieska, who had left the Group after the first Archer show. The second annual exhibition in 1948 was again held at the Archer Gallery. By way of response from the press there was one short passage about us in The Manchester Guardian (Wednesday, 9th June, 1948). This follows on from a review of paintings by Graham Sutherland, which were on show at the Hanover Gallery: "Mr. Sutherland's hot, dry yellows and reds, his pale, fierce mauves, are characteristic and original. Only a real colourist could control such an unruly team. At the Archer Gallery (303, Westbourne Grove) the Borough Group are holding an exhibition. Mr. David Bomberg - the moving spirit - is also a colourist, but of another kind. His two landscapes have a monumental solidity and repose. A young Manchester artist (Mr. Cliff Holden) exhibits a big, ambitious painting of the battered buildings of Lambeth, a version of the London scene which is rough and heavy, but powerful and interesting as well."

Shortly after this, the Group was involved in an exhibition which was held in the open air at the Victoria Embankment Gardens. The BBC invited Lilian and I to be interviewed as a part of a programme called 'In Town Tonight' which also featured the actor Frederick March and his wife, Florence Desmond. This is how the exhibition was reported by the Manchester Guardian (Saturday, 19th June, 1948).

'Plein Air School'

First, sculpture in Battersea Park. Now, easel painting in the Victoria Embankment Gardens. Artists were not slow to accept the London County Council's invitation to turn up with their work, and by midday all the available space along one side of the main walk was packed. The sun shone generously; flowers of the earth waved gently, unregarded, while these blossomings of imagination came under the scrutiny of the passing crowd.

There were, in fact, styles enough for everyone's taste, from imitations of Mr. Disney to the plastic far-farings of the Borough Group, whose manifesto proclaims, "We care for the realities; they exist in the mind." A non-aesthete shouted to the world, "I must be dumb", and some of the artists, agreeable young people, drew members from the crowd into conversation. All this chit-chat removed English solemnity from the occasion (a show of easel paintings in the open air) and helped to give it a happy atmosphere. The exhibition will continue for a week, if fine weather does.

I wrote to Stephen Bone, who was then the art critic for the Manchester Guardian, to inquire if this article had been written by him. In his reply (postmarked 1st April 1949) he said that he had been ill and so had not written anything for the paper for a while but he encouraged me to write to the editor myself. He asked: "Have you heard about the open-air show that the Hampstead Artists' Council are going to run by the Whitestone Pond (weekends only) starting in June? We are trying to organize some method of booking pitches for this. We have the Borough Council's blessing and all seems to be going ahead. I think it should be an improvement on the Embankment Gardens." However, despite Stephen Bone's invitation, the Borough Group did not have anything to do with any other open air exhibitions after the fiasco at the Embankment Gardens. Nevertheless this was the first exhibition of its kind in London and it was the precursor of the displays which one finds now along the railings beside Hyde Park on the Bayswater Road.

Following criticism from inside and from outside the Group, I resigned as President and suggested that Bomberg might take over that responsibility. At this meeting in 1948, which was chaired by Bomberg, there was a disagreement about the direction the Borough Group should take. Some of us objected to Bomberg bringing in his family and people that even he thought were amateurs. I was certainly supported in my position on this issue by Dorothy Mead. I believe that Peter Richmond agreed with us but he was perhaps less inclined to take a firm stand. However Bomberg took the initiative and so, on his insistence, the Group was enlarged. The members were then as follows; David Bomberg, Lilian Bomberg, Cliff Holden, Dorothy Mead, Peter Richmond, Edna Mann, Leslie Marr, Dinora Mendelson, Len Missen and Dorothy Missen.

I would like to record that Minutes were kept of every meeting which took place during the formation and duration of the Borough Group. The Minutes were handed over to Bomberg on his election as President, and he in turn gave them to the elected Secretary. They were subsequently lost without trace and, of course, the Secretary was Dinora, who was a member of the family. So at all future meetings there was no means of referring to earlier resolutions.

The third annual exhibition in 1949 was held at the Arcade Gallery (The Royal Arcade, Bond Street) and here is the statement which we printed with the catalogue.

We have said that our search is towards the spirit in the mass.
Many people have asked us for a further definition.
Words cannot give it;
the answer lies in the content of the painting.
That is our purpose.

Our interest lies more in the mass than in the parts;
More in movement than in the static;
More in the plastic than in the decorative.

Identical objects no longer yield the same experience.
Our awareness is both of sensation and direction.

This exhibition was reviewed by Wyndam Lewis in the Listener magazine (10 March, 1949, p.408) and in this review he described what he had seen at the gallery as the work of "rip roaring flaming romantics." Unfortunately Lewis had visited the gallery the day before the opening so what he saw there then was quite different from the exhibition which we presented to the public and officially to the press. His visit had not been observed because the members of the group were all having lunch at the time. On returning from lunch we were ourselves shocked by the degree of sentiment and romanticism evident in the paintings which, for the past several days, we had been struggling unsuccessfully to hang. Had we left it at that then we would have agreed with his assessment. What Lewis did not know was that, in the twenty four hours left before the opening, the members of the Group rushed back to their various studios to make a different selection of paintings to put into the exhibition. We felt that these works were closer to our philosophical intentions and so the difficulties which we had with hanging the exhibition provided us all with a valuable lesson in judgment.

Other than the review which Lewis gave us (which did not, in any case, apply to it) the exhibition in its final form barely received any comment from the art critics, possibly because they were now presented with work which they found less easy to categorize. The one review which treated us favourably was written not by an art critic but by a film critic. This review appeared in a film magazine called The Cinema Studio (2nd March, 1949).

I know there is a strong connection between the world of Art ... speaking in terms of oil paintings, drawings, etcetera ... and the film ... even on its commercial basis ... but when I was invited to go along to look at the third annual exhibition of the work of the Borough Group at the Royal Arcade Gallery in Bond Street yesterday ... I found myself wondering whether the cinema could ever afford to be as inventive

and creative as are these young artists ... I noticed that the prices of the works ... for which terms may be arranged ... were quite out of reach of the average man and woman but their effects aroused in me memories of the good old days of 'abstract' films and the old Avenue Pavilion ... now, alas, a completely uncommercial proposition ... Were it not so ... I feel that many of our budding geniuses in film might find a similar outlet for what the Borough Group describes as satisfying 'the inner need which craves for the unfathomable'. I doubt whether that aim will find understanding beyond a well versed few ... but it might be a good idea to provide the ways and means for letting off steam outside the costly business of making commercial films ... In the meantime ... I have a completely open mind on this subject of advanced painting ... but would like to find someone brave enough to take me into the depths and explain what lies beyond many of those strange designs whose message, if there be one, remains so obscure!

By now Dennis Creffield had been elected to the Group and his work was included in all the subsequent exhibitions. I had met Dennis in 1947 when I was working for one evening a week at the Goldsmiths Community Centre, teaching drawing and painting to children in their early teens. The main purpose of this work was to keep young trouble makers off the streets. However one of the older boys brought Dennis to meet me after school one day. He had told Dennis that he had met a 'real artist' and he thought that Dennis would gain more from my teaching than he could. I, in turn, introduced Dennis to Bomberg and, a year later when he was still only 17, he came to join us.

In the summer of 1949, the Group exhibited in the Junior Common Room of Brasenose College, Oxford. This was arranged for us and so it was not necessary for us to go there, although we were invited. I wrote to the Editor of the Manchester Guardian to voice my approval for this venture on the part of the undergraduates.

'Pictures For Colleges'

Sir, - I was most interested in the article by your University Correspondent on Oxford in your issue May 3, and I would like to draw your attention to another feature of Oxford which is original, healthy and encouraging to artists. During the past few years Worcester and Pembroke have bought several pictures to decorate their common-rooms, by such artists as Henry Moore, Duncan Grant, John Minton and Victor Pasmore, & c. This year Brasenose College decided upon a similar venture and consequently arrangements were made for the showing of a loan exhibition of pictures by members of "The Borough Group" for the duration of the summer term with a view to purchase. Pictures were chosen for suitability of proportions - one from each of the eleven members of the group, - and for the most part prices were adjusted to be within the reach of the college. The whole aspect has a unity and harmony rarely achieved by a mixed show.

It is hoped that other colleges and universities will emulate the example.

Yours, & c., Cliff Holden, 10, Oakhill Park, London, N.W. 3, May 7

In 1949 and 1950 the Group held a number of monthly exhibitions at The Book Worm Gallery (19 Newport Court, Charing Cross Road). The Book Worm Gallery consisted of two or

three rooms above a book shop which was owned by Leslie Marr and he very generously gave the Group use of this space rent free. These exhibitions were not reviewed by any critics from the press but they did generate some public interest. The statement which was written for the second of these exhibitions contrasts with the earlier statements in that it was not initially drafted by me but by Bomberg.

The sympathetic bond which brings this group of painters together, is the consciousness that the enduring reality lies more in the mass than in the parts.

The intense creative functioning of the mind transcends the tangible experience of one's material being. Our discipline is to acquire that skill which will succeed in the expression of ourselves as individuals.

Although Edna Mann is included in the catalogue as one of the contributors to this exhibition it was at around this time that Bomberg forced Edna Mann to resign. His reason for insisting on this was because she was pregnant and he argued that her career as a painter was not compatible with raising a family. He often tried to steer us away from sex, believing that it interfered with our commitment to art. He did not change his mind about sex and babies, even though when his step-daughter, Dinora, married Leslie Marr he said that it was a perfect match and he sang the praises of a marriage made in heaven.

As a result of the exhibitions at the Book Worm Gallery, the Group received some publicity from an article called 'Six Ways of Seeing Her' which was published in the magazine *Illustrated* (4th June, 1949, pp. 24-25).

To prove how complicated the problem really is, a number of painters calling themselves the "Borough Group" are challenging all orthodox notions of beauty with their "search towards the spirit in the mass." ... They regard their approach "as a means by which mind becomes fluid enough to create forms in the way the fluidity of words can express an idea" ... Here is Mr. Bomberg at hand, once again, with what passes for an explanation in his nebulous world. "We have five senses. If an artist depends only on his sense of sight, his work becomes thin and flat. Reality must be sensed with the entire body, just as we sense gravitation. In applying this to painting - say, to the present model - you must first ask yourself: 'How do I sense this girl?' ... Some feeling from the model comes over to you," Bomberg asserts. "You may be looking at her, but the fluidity of form which is in you creates the design." ... Thus Mr. Bomberg's wife sees the model as "an elegant stream of light," while Cliff Holden has a feeling of "buttresses rearing up in the sky, in the way architecture does." Dinora Mendelson thinks of her simply as "a gipsy girl." ... Says Bomberg: "Unless a man is born with a gift and a desire to create, all his ability and technical dexterity come to nothing. I am a trained artist, but I welcome artists who have not been spoilt by the artificiality of approach that is taught in most schools. Our view is that if we bring the greatest integrity to our work, and are true to ourselves, the matter ends there." In its way "the Group" is well satisfied with itself. There have been several marriages among members - "a natural unifying force of group development" says Bomberg happily. When there is a special case of financial hardship, members make sacrifices or find jobs to help out.

I have omitted to quote those passages which give the article its gently mocking tone. The photographs which accompanied the article show six members of the Group in the act of painting and in each case these portraits are placed alongside a reproduction of the painting they were working on. In my case the caption reads: "Cliff Holden got from the model "a feeling of buttresses rearing into the sky." He went on to say, "I regard the sense of touch as being more profound and more accurate than the eye.""

At this time there were critics who called us 'dark German expressionists' and one critic in particular, Stephen Bone from the Manchester Guardian (the son of Sir Muirhead Bone), thought that we were trying to leap before we could walk. But it would have been more correct to have made these kinds of remarks about those people in the middle sixties that were loosely called the 'Bomberg School'. They were using thick paint and dark paint, with very little concern for the image, the form or the structure.

Owing to the disagreements which had continued ever since Bomberg became President, we came to a general agreement that we should disband the Group. This happened over several months, between the autumn of 1950 and the spring of 1951. Not one of the original members of the Borough Group has since managed to achieve a dealer or a gallery or a patron and I attribute this to a series of unlucky happenings. Our activities during the period from 1946 to 1951 produced the most extraordinary reactions from other painters, critics and art historians. The painters were mostly outraged and the critics mostly treated us as a kind of comic act (the article in Illustrated magazine, if quoted in full, would serve as an example of this). Our achievement as a group was ignored in favour of the Kitchen Sink School and later, of course, in the 50's we were overtaken by the waves from America like the New Expressionists, the Tachists and the Action Painters.

Then with the 'Bomberg School' it was the critics themselves who we felt had double-crossed us and cut out any chance of public recognition for what was a very vital movement. This came about as a result of the influence which Dorothy Mead and Dennis Creffield had when they were studying at the Slade for the diploma which would qualify them to teach. Dorothy enrolled in 1956 and Creffield enrolled one year later in 1957. Although they were both mature artists, who had been exhibiting publicly for over ten years, they enrolled as students because this enabled them to continue their work as painters with the benefits of a grant and use of a model. Unfortunately the influence they had on the impressionable students around them at the school resulted in these students producing a pastiche and a bastardization of Bomberg's ideas. Any black charcoal drawing or any turgid thick paint, no matter what the quality or kind of image, was termed Bombergian and the critics then began to talk about the 'Bomberg School,' which was an invention by the critics and only served to further obliterate any achievement of the original Borough Group, who had by now been completely forgotten.

I still think that what we had achieved is, in a limited way, as important as the ideas created by the Cubists coming out of Cezanne. We also come from Cezanne and have made something which avoided the fallacies of Cubism.

It is also surprising to discover that the Cubists only held three exhibitions whereas the Borough Group held seven exhibitions over the five years it was in existence. The Cubists aroused the critics whereas publicly we were greeted with almost total silence. Nevertheless we generated a lot of anger and opposition from the establishment and many other artists like Keith Vaughan, Coldstream and Pasmore. I have never understood why this hostility should have come from these artists who were in positions of power and who were themselves considered to be successful. It was as if they were threatened by us in some way. I found this hard to understand considering the difficulties which we shared with Bomberg in trying to reach a

public. Despite Dorothy Mead being refused a diploma from the Slade she still considered herself to be a friend of Sir William Coldstream and she would refer to him with affection as 'Uncle Bill.' But, although he could easily have done so, he did not do anything to help in furthering her career. In fact he was instrumental in her being refused the diploma, which effectively denied her access to full-time employment as a teacher within the art school system, and she died without ever having had a one-man show in England.

The power of Bomberg's teaching is shown by the fact that the kind of images which the Borough Group produced were totally different in character to anything that Bomberg had produced, although they were somewhat similar in direction to each other. But the interesting fact is that in the last two or three years before his death he began to draw landscapes very much in the same spirit as those drawings, both of landscape and figures, which were made by the members of the Borough Group. They were totally different to any drawings that Bomberg had made previously. But no art historian or critic has observed this difference in the character and content of Bomberg's later drawings. None of them have dared to suggest that Bomberg might have been influenced by us, rather than the other way around, and yet, if they were to compare the works in question, then they would see that it is so.

Nevertheless, we fulfilled Bomberg's intention that the students would give something back to their master. He intended that we should develop ideas between us. After all, philosophers and scientists work together in this way. He always said that he hoped to get back from the students part of what he had put into them. It was the two-way traffic between the idea of the master and idea of the student which provided a stimulus for Bomberg himself. It was his belief that if he gave out stimuli and ideas then, in return, using the students as nature, the students would give back ideas in the exchange. Bomberg provided the stimulus for us to produce our own ideas and this we did through the medium of our collaborative effort as the Borough Group. One might compare it to what the Cubists did in relation to Cezanne. Like the Cubists our work appeared so similar that it was difficult for some people to say who had painted one and not another. We were similar to each other in the way that Picasso, Braque and Gris were similar to each other when they were developing the ideas of Cubism. This was because they were all operating from a common base and it was the same with us. When we painted badly - I don't like to use the word 'badly,' I mean uncreatively - our paintings looked so much alike that you couldn't tell the difference between one and the other. But when one of us had really made that leap into the creative act, then you could see the difference in the idea. So by a continuing exchange and dialogue between us we were evolving an idiom in painting which was totally different to anything which Bomberg had produced up to that time.

Although the Borough Group had disbanded, Mead, Creffield, Richmond and I were all agreed that we wanted to continue to exhibit together. And so, some months later, we decided to organise an exhibition of our work at the Parsons Gallery. We invited Bomberg to join us but he refused. Gus Metzger was responsible for introducing us to the gallery and here is the letter which he sent to Peter Richmond and myself.

2 Studio, 4 Albert Street, London NW1
26.10.51

Dear Peter and Cliff,

Last night I called at 52 in order to sleep there and see Cliff and was told that you were in Yorkshire. I will give you a summary of the position regards available galleries.

On Tuesday I saw Mesens at the London Gallery. He explained that the minimum payment for use of the gallery per month would be £60 or £70. On top of this there would be about £10 rates. He has been trying to discuss this with three other directors, but has not yet seen any of them. Tonight or tomorrow morning he may be able to give me some information. I doubt though that we can rent the gallery as it is on the point of being sold. I have been to the Artist's House and have an appointment on next Wednesday to find out some details from the woman in charge, Mrs. Davie.

The other gallery I have contacted is in the house of Parsons who are paint manufacturers. The house is in Grosvenor Street, 50 yards from where the St. George Gallery used to be. The gallery is on the first floor, about 35 by 15 feet. It has windows on the two 15 foot ends of the room, but it is necessary to light the exhibition with eight adjustable spot-lights fixed on the high ceiling. The walls are in light oakwood and cut up by a certain amount of panels and ornament, but the impression of the place is quite reasonable.

This morning I had an interview with Sir Michael (I forget his surname), a young man who would I think be willing to let us have the gallery if he considered it would draw the public, especially the more wealthy elements. The conditions are as follows. The gallery is rent free, but each exhibition must be in aid of some charity and 25% of the sale of paintings go to this charity. The cost of advertising, invitation cards and catalogue would have to be paid by exhibitors. The last exhibition there was by N. R. Egon, in aid of Greek Children; most of the other exhibitions there were in aid of children and Sir Michael suggested that we might find some children's charity too.

He wanted above all to see our work and requested for two works by each of us. I have made an appointment to bring him the works for Thursday 1st Nov. at 2.30 pm. Will you consider this position and write to me at once what your attitude is regards this matter and, if you should be willing to negotiate with Sir Michael, would you let me know which of your works I should bring and where they are stored. The best solution would be for one or both of you to be in London by Thursday. I would certainly be more satisfied if you could be present at this interview, but if he should turn down the work, you might have wasted your journey. He suggested the show start on the 26th Nov. for 3 weeks. Whatever you decide to do, let me know by Mon or Tues. Also please let me know the address of Dennis and Dorothy. If the London Gallery should be open to us I shall send you a telegram. I am leaving London tomorrow but should return Monday or Tuesday. I am living at the Youth Hostel but address all letters to 2 Studio.

Best Greetings to you and Nora,
Gustav

It is evident from this letter that Gus Metzger expected to be included in the exhibition, in spite of the fact that he had always refused to be a member of the Borough Group. I will make reference to the reasons why he was not included at a later point in this book. No doubt it was because he felt he had been rejected that, when he became a member of the newly formed Borough Bottega two years later, he told a lot of lies about me and this caused me to be even further alienated from Bomberg.

3

The Stockholm Exhibition

Mead, Creffield, Richmond and I showed at the Parsons Gallery in December 1951. A young Swedish painter called Torsten Renquist came to view this exhibition and he invited the four of us to exhibit at the Gummersons Gallery in Stockholm the following Spring. The exhibition was given the title 'Four Englishmen' and it was open to the public for one month, from April until May, in 1952.

The exhibition was reported in the English press in a way which suggested that we were making a great deal of money. In fact we made more money by exhibiting the car which we arrived in than by exhibiting our paintings. We had broken down on the journey and when we arrived, with the car running on only three cylinders and covered in mud, we went to a garage to have it repaired. The car was a 1934 Austin and it struck the garage owner as being so unusual that he put it in his showroom window for two weeks with spotlights on it. This caused such a spectacle that the police had to move on the crowds who came to look at it. The garage owner paid us 150 Swedish Crowns a day for using the vehicle to advertise his business and this was a sum of money which was worth having in those days. Here is an article which was written for the Daily Express just after the exhibition had closed (Tuesday, 6th May, 1952).

'Three artists in old taxi make a city sit up'

Three hard-up London artists have brought 85 of their paintings to Stockholm in a 1934 taxi which they paid for by going hop-picking. And now the Swedish critics can hardly find enough adjectives to praise their work.

The artists - 27-year-old Dorothy Mead; Dennis Creffield; and Cliff Holden, 33 - call themselves the remnants of the Borough school of painting, which used to flourish at the Elephant and Castle. In Britain they "exhibited" pictures on Thames lighters, on the Embankment, and on South London rooftops.

Now fashionable crowds go to see their work in a de luxe private gallery in Stockholm's Park-lane. And their pictures are fetching £10 to £90 each.

Which is quite a change from the days when Dorothy worked as an usherette, Dennis Creffield as a railway porter, and Cliff Holden as boxer, fisherman, farmhand and navvy.

The British Ambassador, Mr. Roger Stevens, has visited their exhibition in Stockholm. And the Swedish Press says things like this:- "These painters represent a phalanx of the very young." ... "their expressionism rests on classical as well as volcanic bases." ... And, more simply: "We should be thankful they have come here."

Holden said today: "We are striving after new art forms. Dozens of sketches often go into one picture. It's hard work. That's why we don't teach or take office work to make ends meet, like most needy artists. We need all our creative and spiritual resources for painting. But we are sometimes *driven* to manual labour. It's less tiring than brain work. All we want now is someone to give us a name, like Cubists or Existentialists. We think we have got something original."

And the Swedes think so too.

On the whole we got very good critics, but we sold nothing. At that time critical opinion and the artists were oriented towards the School of Paris. The extraordinary thing was that Torsten Renquist tried to change this flow and it was most extraordinary that he chose us when his orientation and stimulus came, not from the actual works, but from reproductions of Nash, Sutherland and all those painters stemming from that third-rate master Samuel Palmer. It was a kind of conspiracy between Sir Kenneth Clark and Herbert Read to resurrect this minor painter to justify interest in the detail of nature plus a kind of romantic symbolism which was supposed to be characteristic of English painting. Although the Stockholm critics were positive, nevertheless they had very little understanding of our paintings and they had, of course, never heard of David Bomberg.

They made connections with our work to Turner, of course, and Henry Moore because we dealt with figures and to Monet because we had several paintings of cathedrals. With Turner it was because we exhibited several London landscapes. They even referred to Helen Scherfbeck, which I think was largely because we were making drawings in charcoal. One critic related us to Montecelli - a painter that I had never heard of at that time - and it was many years before I came across his work in relation to Delacroix and Van Gogh. In fact Van Gogh said: "I sometimes think I am really continuing that man."

With the best intentions, Renquist wrote a piece for the catalogue in Swedish. He did not check with us first and so it was full of mistakes from beginning to end. But I could not read it. I was unaware of what it contained and, in my enthusiasm, I rather naively sent a copy to Bomberg, thinking - and this is the naive part - that it would please him that we were continuing the activity and spreading his ideas abroad. Apparently Bomberg had it translated immediately and was furious because it seemed to him to say that he was an old man no longer active in painting. He wrote me a letter in which he said that we were not the only ones going forward with the ideas that he taught and because of this catalogue introduction and what it contained, he never wanted to see me or speak to me again.

It was only when I had this catalogue introduction translated for myself, some 25 years later, that I began to understand why he had reacted in this way. I have marked the translation to indicate where the mistakes are.

'Four Englishmen' by Torsten Renquist, 1952

The conception 'pure art' exists in England too. But the works which are presented under that designation differ considerably from Parisian works of the same name; 'outlawed' additions such as emotionalism and illustration are apparent in England even in radical non-figurative work, and one would be inclined to regard the designation 'pure art' as unnecessary and quite misplaced, if it were not that the theory in question had shown itself to be a particularly strong motive force. The literary or illustrative element in pictorial art has been considered traditionally in England as an asset rather than as an impurity to be avoided, and few artists there have worked from the conception that art is one of the sciences. The history of art in England, as well as the present situation, offers many examples of poets who paint and draw, and abstracts look back to Klee and Kandinsky in preference to a purist like Mondrian.

English painting has often, and with some justice, been accused of being dull, colourless and watery. Oil painting suffers from an overwhelming tradition of watercolours, and artistry in its entirety seems to be subjected to a kind of gentleman like attitude, in which exaggeration is bad taste and understatement the accepted rule. In any case, as far as understatement is concerned, the vigorous painting which is now being presented to the

Swedish public is an exception, but yet typically English in its lyricism and closeness to nature, in spite of everything.

These four young painters regard themselves as representatives of a realistic striving in the spirit of pure art, but are marked by a Gallic-schooled self-criticism as full-blooded romantics. What they are will probably be difficult to decide, especially as the descriptions are altogether too vague, but their realistic pretensions come into a new light and, so I believe, are explained, if one compares them with the older generation Sutherland, Moore and others, who in the cultural activity in London after the war monopolized the slogan 'Romantic-renaissance'. For the older generation's romanticism is of a half surrealist allegorical kind and, in comparison with this, the pictures exhibited here appear as direct nature impressions, realism although they are, pictures of dusk and Rembrandt light.

Peter Richmond, Dennis Creffield, Dorothy Mead and Cliff Holden studied under the old painter David Bomberg,¹ a man who, in his time,² stood near to the Vorticists and Wyndam Lewis,³ a futurist inspired movement,⁴ which shocked London in the Twenties⁵ with all kinds of work and publications.

Bomberg was, moreover, one of the founders of the then well known group of the Thirties,⁶ the London Group, which was the equivalent of our Colour and Form, in other respects besides its organising shape. He gradually abandoned his earlier, severe painting for a titanic landscape style, wrote penetrating manifestoes⁷ and became a teacher at the Borough Polytechnic in London, where he developed his panorama programme in more detail,⁸ the fruits of which can be studied in the works now on exhibition.

¹ 'old painter'; it was not necessary to say this. It would have been much better to say 'their master,' as the relationship was one of master to student.

² 'in his time'; this makes it sound as if he was already dead. It would have been much better to have given dates, say between 1914 and 1920.

³ 'stood near to the Vorticists'; Bomberg always rejected the Vorticist's appeals for him to participate in their exhibitions. He quarrelled with Wyndam Lewis, the writer and theoretician of the group, and then Bomberg and Lewis had no further contact with each other until 1949.

⁴ 'futurist inspired movement'; the Vorticists were not a futurist inspired movement. They were a development of Cubism.

⁵ 'shocked London in the Twenties'; the Vorticists shocked London not during the Twenties but, rather, before the Twenties.

⁶ 'of the Thirties'; the London Group was in fact founded in 1914, by Bomberg and others, as a reaction to the New English Art Club and the Royal Academy. The group was well known in the Thirties but it was well known from the start.

⁷ 'wrote penetrating manifestoes'; this is confusing because Bomberg actually wrote a quantity of philosophical and poetical notes which became known after his death as 'The Bomberg Papers.' He did not write any 'penetrating manifestoes.' These were mostly written by Cliff Holden and edited by Bomberg and the members of the Borough Group.

⁸ 'panorama programme'; although Bomberg himself painted a large number of landscapes, his teaching had not only to do with the landscape but also with the human figure and the still life. The approach to all subject matter was oriented towards the working out of ideas in relation to what Bomberg termed 'the spirit in the mass.'

Bomberg gathered a good many pupils around him⁹ in the course of the time; they exhibited annually under the name the Borough Group, and achieved a certain position in the art life of London. The group split up however,¹⁰ Bomberg did not appear so much as time went by,¹¹ and today these four artists remain, forming a very homogeneous group, which works and exhibits together.

A clue to why Renquist chose us to show in Sweden when he himself was in search of the Englishness of English painting, came in a statement which he wrote some months later when he said that our exhibition was the most 'Scandinaviska' he had seen in London. What he really meant was that we had affinities with the Swedish painter Evert Lundquist. After the exhibition Lundquist wrote to us and invited Dorothy Mead and I to an English tea. He was very English oriented, although his background in painting was French oriented. When I finally came to his studio and saw his paintings, it was a revelation to me. Here was a man working exactly parallel with our intentions. It was just like two scientific events taking place in different countries of the world at the same time without contact but reaching the same conclusions.

The effect of Lundquist's paintings on me was so powerful that I cried. I think this was partly because I realized that he had achieved something of what we were striving to do, but it was also a relief to realize that he was doing something different to Bomberg and different to what we had achieved and it was interesting to compare the different forms of engagement and it served to prove and confirm what I already knew - the shallowness of Auerbach's academic image concealed by his thick paint antics.

I had an ambition to bring Bomberg and Lundquist together, but this never came about due to Bomberg residing in Spain up to his death. I tried desperately to introduce Lundquist to London. Swedish government policy was not, like in England, geared to exporting art. Art in Sweden was a purely domestic matter. It took me nine years before I managed to get Lundquist an exhibition at the Beaux Arts Gallery.

⁹ 'a good many pupils around him'; apart from Dorothy Mead and Edna Mann and the members of his family and Bomberg's students at the Architectural Association, most students were recruited by Cliff Holden and Dorothy Mead (from other art schools and the pubs of Soho). The Borough Group was formed in 1946 following discussions between Cliff Holden and Bomberg, which had begun in 1944. There were students who attended Bomberg's regular classes at the Borough Polytechnic, but they took no part in the creation and activities of the Borough Group.

¹⁰ 'the group split up'; the Borough Group split up because of disagreements as to future policy and direction. Creffield, Holden, Mead and Richmond decided to continue exhibiting together. Their exhibition at the Parson's Gallery in London was seen by the Swedish artist Torsten Renquist who arranged an exhibition in Stockholm. He wrote the foreword to the catalogue in Swedish without reference to the artists concerned and they were therefore ignorant of the content of this text. Holden sent a copy of the catalogue to Bomberg expecting him to be pleased with their continuing activity in furthering his ideas. However Bomberg was so insulted when he read a translation of it that he wrote to Holden forbidding him to have any further contact. This was a terrible tragedy for Holden as he was unable to meet with Bomberg and explain the situation before Bomberg's death in 1957. Holden did not have the translation made (which is printed above) until some twenty years later and it was only then that he realized how he had unwittingly caused his master such offense.

¹¹ 'did not appear as time went by'; this gives the impression that Bomberg was old and inactive. This is simply not true. After the Borough Group disbanded, he not only organized the formation of another group but he also made some of his finest paintings. In the last two years of his life he did some charcoal drawings which were unlike anything he had done before, but which can be related to the kind of work which had evolved within the Borough Group. This demonstrated Bomberg's belief that the relationship of master and student was a two way traffic. This has not been observed by the critics and historians.

After the exhibition in Stockholm, when all the dinners and cocktail parties were over, I was reduced to working as a kitchen porter at the Berns Salonger, which was a restaurant in Stockholm famous for its connection with August Strindberg. I was paid 2 shillings an hour and the same job in the Lyons Corner House back home would have paid 2 shillings and six pence. After some months doing various odd jobs, Dorothy and I had enough money to travel to Spain. We spent two years in the south of Spain at Almuneca, Torrox, Ronda, Gibraltar, Alcala de los Gazules and other places. While I was in Spain with Dorothy I was shocked to receive the letter from Bomberg in which he reacted to Torsten Renquist's catalogue introduction. It was this letter which ended our relationship.

Clifford Holden,

For things said and done and for behaviour to myself and Lilian, it is best as I said at the time there shall be no more friendship with you or with the others that supported you.

And this is the reason why I have not replied to your previous letter.

The world is still large enough to move about in without wishing to hurt one another - and with regards to writing I would rather you did not and this goes also for your offer to try and present my work in Stockholm.

It is unfortunate that it should be this way - and that this should be the nature of the conflict between the young and the not so young - the pupils and the master.

I am glad you have both benefited from the life and climate of Spain - you both had a very good training and I have no doubt it will stand you in good stead.

The road to art is a long and hard one but it has its compensations and the measure of a good artist is in his work - no words can either embellish or detract - they may falsify as is the prevalent practice - but time and events are the eventual crucible.

The old painter who did not appear so much as time went by - to the two of the four artists who thought and published that they were the sole remaining inheritors of the approach to mass taught by me - but in actual fact being practised quite richly and effectively by a number of young and gifted personalities.

I will send the Palleten to the address in Manchester you gave in your letter.

David Bomberg

When Dorothy and I were living at Torrox, Peter and Nora Richmond came to live in a house nearby. For several months the four of us continued to paint together and then later, during the summer of 1953, Creffield, Oxlade and Scott came to visit us from London.

In 1954 Dorothy and I left for England and I hoped that I would be able to meet Bomberg in London to have a discussion and sort out our problems and misunderstandings. However, I had no money for petrol and an old car which kept breaking down so that we both had to work our way back, taking odd jobs as we could find them. The journey from Spain to London took us three months. When we arrived back in London we found that Bomberg and Lilian had left for Spain in February to found a school of painting in Ronda. I did not have the possibility to go back to Ronda myself and I was forced to take on more casual work in order to survive and to pay back some of the money I had borrowed during my stay in Spain. The jobs were many and varied, for example, night porter at Victoria Station (and then painting during the day), or night work at Walls Ice Cream factory making sausages, or a day job building up the embankment to

the River Thames at Kew Gardens. Other opportunities to show my work included various exhibitions of graphic art, for example, at the Stockport Coffee Bar in Nottinghill Gate, and at Liberties on Regent Street.

While Dorothy and I had been in Spain, Bomberg had, with the help of his family and several students, created another group which they called the Borough Bottega. (Incidentally, at the winding up of the Borough Group we had agreed never to use the name Borough Group again.) The Borough Bottega was formed in 1953 and continued to be active for two years until the last exhibition which was held at Walker's Galleries (118 New Bond Street) in 1955 (21st March - 2nd April). By this time Bomberg and Lilian had been out of the country for over a year. The catalogue gives the names of the artists who participated as follows; David Bomberg, Lilian Holt, Dinora Mendelson, Leslie Marr, Richard Michelmores, Garth Scott, Roy Oxlade, Cecil Bailey and Anthony Hatwell. Here is the Foreword which was printed with the catalogue for that exhibition.

'Foreword'

The name Borough Bottega derives from the 15th century Italian 'bottega' - the workshop in which the apprentice painters learnt their art at the hands of a master - and the Polytechnic, S.E.1. where David Bomberg, the group's founder, was teaching from 1945 to 1953.

The Bottega is made up of painters, sculptors, and architects, who were originally students of David Bomberg at the Borough Polytechnic, and who have remained together to practise their individual assessment of mass in representation of form, whether in landscape, architecture, or working from life. They reject the superficial representation of appearances which goes by the name of, and is often mistaken for 'Realism', experimenting on the basis that all experience is inter-related, and forms part of the cosmic unity and can be interpreted neither in terms of unrelated parts, nor patterns of attractive, decorative blocks of colour. If one becomes obsessed with these one cannot hope to reveal the underlying forces which govern the earth and all thereupon.

The foundation of any work is an abstract, and this gradually evolves towards expression of thought and feeling. It succeeds as an abstract only insofar as it is able to convey thought and feeling, and by a juxtaposition of forms, becomes articulate.

David Bomberg himself makes acknowledgment to Cezanne, the Impressionists and the Cubists, all of whom helped to the realization of an idiom by which to render mass, the organic unity.

During the meetings which were held during the formation of the Borough Bottega many lies were told about me to smear my name and my activities. We heard about what was happening at the time from a letter which Dennis Creffield sent to us (this was shortly before he came out to Spain to join us, accompanied by Garth Scott and Roy Oxlade).

2 Church Hill,
Charing Heath,
Ashford, Kent.

Sunday 5th July 1953

Dear Cliff and Dorothy,

Your letter was forwarded on here to me where I am having severe backache in the strawberry fields. Thank you very much for it. Garth and Roy are also both here.

I can tell you some more about the exhibition. It appears Bomberg's idea is to form another group. At the mention of the word Kossof and Auerbach have pulled out and will not exhibit, the individual soul tack. Leslie says he has no vocation in painting. Dinora and Lilian say they have had a lot of unhappiness before. Len Missen is considered as a possible member and exhibitor but does not appear to have been consulted about his views. So everything is in abeyance until their next meeting. They have been told a history of the Borough Group and the Parsons incident and Michelmores read aloud Bomberg's letter to you and a translation of Torsten's introduction which he considers an attack upon himself as it calls him old and implying that he is finished. This introduction he considers your work. I was furious at the blatant attempt to alienate these younger people against us and wonder if it forebodes more militant attacks in the future. They have finally decided to call the exhibition 'Borough '53'?

Now about our trip. I have so many things to ask but first I must say that Roy is coming with us, that we hope to arrive during the first week in August and stay for about three months. First what is the weather like? Does one need lots of blankets and things like overcoats and warm clothes? Are sandals cheap in Spain and consequently would it be better to buy them there than here? Are there any articles which one can bring and sell at a profit? Viz. rubber goods? Do you think hammocks are a good idea for beds? You mentioned in an earlier letter a folding spade ditto bicycle and a parachute? What of these things now? Does one need a lamp? I shall no doubt think of more questions and will write them as they appear.

I see there are two talks on the third programme this week of Ludwig Wittengenstein's book 'Philosophical Investigations' which has just been published here. Is this the book you wrote about 'Logic etc.'? In any case I will try to get it and bring it with me.

Due no doubt to the opening paragraph of your letter I went to bed and had a bad nightmare in which three people near me were murdered and I came to a five barred gate where there was an emaciated dog and a decomposing woman who as I passed through gave me a book and told me to read it. Which all sounds rather silly but it unsettled me all day even though the sun was shining.

I was very pleased to read that 'D. is O.K.' upon which happy thing I send all greetings and wishes to both of you.

Dennis

Arising from the attacks made against me in the meetings which Dennis refers to, I have suffered for the rest of my life by innuendoes, lies, half-truths and omissions in all the catalogues, books and articles that have been written about Bomberg. Even the statements that were written for the early Borough Group exhibitions were later to become attributed to Bomberg and quoted as if they represented a personal statement by him.

When Dennis was with us in Spain he received a letter from Bomberg which was a response to his request to become a member of the Borough Bottega. This letter also gives Bomberg's view on what had caused the Borough Group to disband.

30 Steeles Road,
London NW3

28th Nov. 1953

Dear Dennis Creffield,

In reply to your letter of the 24th of Nov. I am not a member of the Bottega - I am Honorary Life Member - and will send work to all exhibitions - I do not vote - but at the Council Meetings I attend I make what I believe to be constructive suggestions and have helped to form the rules of the constitution.

Regarding your wish to join the Bottega the constitution rule is that for three years you would need to be a guest exhibitor - and the members of the Council would then need to invite you for three years in succession. Then you would be made an Associate Member. Another three years of support of the Bottega exhibitions would make you a full member with a vote. To be a member of the Council there would need be a vacancy on the Council before the Council could vote in one to fill it from the body of the full membership. I shall give the Hon. Secretary who is Micheltore your letter and he will put your request on the agenda of the forthcoming meeting. There is no other way of bringing up the matter and we will write to you accordingly after the meeting.

I was among the others of the London Group selecting for the current show (which closed today) and voted for the two works each of you sent in - in case one was made a doubtful and I expected that the hanging committee would select these 'Doubtfuls' for exhibition. The fact that they did not shows the character of the opposition - which I interpret as that of Fear. This Fear, in my view, shows the work to be more understood than when examples of each of you were hung in the previous years when the unorthodoxy was not comprehended as a challenge. This London Group exhibition would have had a more vital impact on the critique had the hanging committee had the courage to hang the contributions of all you sent. Patrick Heron and Kenneth Martin endeavoured to get some of your works back on to the selecting table for reassessment. Both of Holden's paintings were brought back - but the voting remained the same one out one doubtful. I could not understand this endeavour unless it was a token that any change from the favoured idioms would be welcome.

Though you did not understand the nature of the loyalty necessary to succeed against the favoured idioms - and this, too, was underestimated by all who took part in the Parsons Gallery and the Stockholm shows - the older member had had a sufficiency of life experience to comprehend the struggle for survival. It was evident to me that the mishandling I was taking, both from my Artist Colleagues and from yourselves - from the first I knew, how well integrated we had to be to succeed in rowing this boat at all - but if in this boat some members only thought of themselves and discredited the rowing of the

others - those others were going to be very displeased - and so it was that I got the scouldings from those who were rowing for all and more from those rowing for themselves - on this followed the annulment of the Borough Group.

The task we had undertaken was one that can only be done by a Team - in a team spirit. Individualism is meant for the painting. All have different temperaments, assessments, outlooks and imaginations, and all contribute in their own way to an expansion in our approach to mass. This mingling of personalities with a specific aim would have brought us out on top in a short period following our foundation if the team spirit had been maintained rather than undermined.

This was the meaning of the loyalties - but Oxlade adopted a most impregnable front and unflinching attitude in supporting your side of the idiom - I am still at a loss to explain it - other than by what is the obvious explanation.

It so happens as the present constitution of the Bottega shows that those most discriminated against by Cliff Holden have proved their loyal support both to the idiom and to the source and in face of a multitude of devastating family relationships.

Please tell Cliff Holden I received his letter and that I could only repeat what I said in my letter of April last to which he refers to remind me. Two days after I received 'Paletten' I packed it and properly addressed it to his mother E.F. Holden, Lindow Common, Wilmslow, Manchester. I wrote on the package in case it was undelivered the name of Clifford Holden, Lista de Correos, Almunecar, Granada, Espana. the post office weighed and stamped it. It is most unfortunate that this package did not reach Mrs. Holden. I cannot see what I could have done other than was asked - except putting his name and address as the sender instead of mine. I trust however it may turn up. I shall make another enquiry at the post office giving the particulars.

Yours sincerely,
David Bomberg

Dennis Creffield
Azucarera Larios,
Torrox, Malaga, Spain

P.S. I know the members are in favour of a strong presentation and with this in view it is on the agenda that Oxlade be given the opportunity of making his position clear once again. If there should be no further objection to the title of the group - it is likely he will rejoin the group where he broke off. The members are also determined to indentify the source of the idiom and to maintain this purpose any member having a one-man show must declare themselves members of the Borough Bottega.

P.P.S. This year besides my own three new paintings the London Group hung - Diana, Dinora, Leslie and Lilian - though the paintings did not get through - we are sorry that Diana's Nocturne Paris canvas 28x36 inches did not get the sufficient votes

At this time a lot of the accusations against me of various kinds were made by Gus Metzger. He was a brilliant student whom I had introduced to Bomberg together with his

brother Max, in 1945, but they always refused to join the Borough Group, preferring to be independent. Two months after Bomberg died, I happened to meet Gus Metzger by chance in Piccadilly and I took hold of him by the ear and dragged him to a lawyer in Burlington Street. There he signed an affidavit in which he retracted all the things that he had said about me and agreed that at the time he was lying. For the record, here is the wording of that document.

London

30th October 1957

I, the undersigned, would like to state that at the meeting which formed the Borough Bottega, I made accusations and statements against the character and intentions of Cliff Holden which had no foundation in truth.

Contrary to what I said Cliff Holden took no part in excluding me from the exhibition at the Parson's Gallery in 1951. The guilty parties who spoke against me on this occasion were Peter Richmond, Dennis Creffield and Dorothy Mead.

On that occasion, as at all other times, Cliff Holden has consistently encouraged me in my work as a painter, and at all times endeavoured to persuade me to participate in the activities of the Borough Group. Even in the above situation he merely bowed to the majority view that my work was not of a sufficiently unique or professional character to benefit that exhibition.

I would like to take this opportunity to apologize for the harm caused by myself on this occasion to the character and integrity of Cliff Holden.

(This was signed by Gustav Metzger in my presence and he acknowledged that the statement was true. This 30th day of October 1957. Signed: Stephen Young, Solicitor. 2 Old Burlington St., London W1)

In May 1957, three months before Bomberg died, he gave Peter Richmond the authority to write a series of letters inviting past members of the Borough Group and the Borough Bottega Group to attend a summer school in Ronda. Dorothy Mead and Dennis Creffield were both invited and so one can see that Bomberg was striving for a reconciliation. Of the four of us who had taken part in the Stockholm exhibition in 1952, Peter Richmond had already been forgiven and now Bomberg hoped to bring the others back into the fold. What is extraordinary to me is that Bomberg had included Edna Mann in the list of those to be invited despite the fact that he forced her to resign from the Borough Group when she had a baby. Here is the letter which was sent to her.

Lista de Correos,
Ronda, Provincia de Malaga, Spain

29th May 1957

Dear Edna,

Mr. Bomberg is recovering from an illness. Not having over much strength and that employed on other things that he only can do, he asks me to send out announcements and invitations to a Summer School which will be held in Ronda this year. He hopes you will find a way to come.

He does not believe that anyone who is a painter can give up painting for good. Consequently that you have come back to it, or will do so. (This is assuming you ever gave it up.)

His conception of the Borough Idea makes necessary this reunion for practice, criticism and discussion again. Everyone took experience from the Borough to use in individual directions. After a period of ploughing the furrows there should be a reassembly, where the common fund of vision and experience is enriched with the results of individual research and maturity. Then with new and fresh stimulus each returns to his or her private field. In this way of cycles coming together and dispersion, individual vision will grow to maturity without losing the standards and confidence of profession fostered at the Borough.

Conditions here in Ronda make this the ideal time and place for the first reunion in practice after a long enough interval of separation since the Borough Class closed. The site is full of natural and architectural extraordinariness and facilities for assembling and painting are as good as can be desired. A large studio is available in a central position for base and headquarters. Camp beds can be brought or hammocks. (There is a partitioned piece for the ladies.) Food will be supplied from a common pot and a caretaker will look after practicalities. Subjects lie on the doorstep and nothing need interfere with each day being given to painting and drawing. Work will be assembled and exhibited each Saturday afternoon. Bomberg will attend for tuition advice, criticism and with emulation and discussion the fruitful spirit of the Borough will be reborn at once and confident vision and sense of purpose regained to pursue our more solitary ways.

There is no charge for the course or tuition fees. There is no fixed date, members will decide among themselves the time most can come. Contact Richard Michelmores (16, Garrick Close, Walton-on-Thames) or Dennis Creffield (222, Lee High Road, Lewisham, S.W.13) for the dates that are best.

This is an important event; see if you can find a way to leave the children and Don for a few weeks and join the band. The way is probably by ship to Gibraltar, but a bus to bring everybody will be found if it can be.

Besides members of the Borough Bottega, those Mr. Bomberg believes should be here are: Peter Arnold, Dennis Creffield, Gus Metzger, Dorothy Mead, Dorothy Missen, Leslie Marr, David Scott, Garth Scott, John Berger, yourself, Nora and myself and two other men who have already been here.

All good wishes and greetings to Don.

Peter Richmond

In a similar letter which was sent to Dorothy Mead, Roy Oxlade was included in the list of artists who Bomberg wished to invite and, following the name of John Berger, it says in brackets, "as a painter rather than a critic." The letter then continues as follows.

Cliff is not on the list, nor Kossof nor Auerbach, since they have given evidence of a determination to make their way alone.

The plan is to avoid making practical demands on the Bombergs unnecessarily and to avoid the too close personal relations that lead to friction, that a base and headquarters is made of a large studio which Nora and I have in a central position, about a quarter of a mile from Bomberg's home.

Bomberg did not seem to understand how much I wanted to be reconciled with him. Far from rejecting him and his teaching, I was loyal to him and I have remained so all my life. However when, in 1956, I was invited back to Sweden to exhibit my paintings in a one-man show, I had no idea that this chapter of my life was over and that I would never meet David Bomberg again. With the work I took with me to Sweden I mounted two exhibitions, one in Stockholm and one in Gothenburg. The Stockholm one was a success but the Gothenburg one failed. It had not failed critically but economically, so I was still left in my usual situation of being in debt and having no money. At the same time I met my wife, Lisa Gronwall, who was a textile designer using a small studio in collaboration with a colleague, Maj Nilsson.

Marstrand Designers

In 1956 I had an exhibition in Gothenburg which was a success but, after expenses, there was not enough money to cover my debts. With no money, no job and nowhere to live, I was rescued by my friend Torsten Renquist who had become the head of the Valand School of Art. He invited me to give a critique to the students and to lecture and demonstrate screen printing at the Valand School of Art. They couldn't afford to pay me any fee but I was given a free lunch and it was warm and I was allowed to sleep on the floor in my sleeping bag.

I met Lisa Grönwall, who subsequently became both my partner and my wife. She painted but she was also trained and earned a living of sorts as a textile designer. She shared a studio in Västergatan, Gothenburg, together with a colleague Maj Nilsson, who was also a trained textile designer. They were mostly doing weavings. During my frequent visits to their studio, I began to see the possibility of earning a living by design. Our economic situation was similar - both Lisa and Maj lived at home and their earnings amounted to nothing more than pocket money. I myself had no money at all and was badly in debt. We had no capital but we had a studio and so we decided to collaborate and I would bring my expertise to the job. I was by then a master printer, using silk screen printing. I felt there must be a market out there in the commercial world; there must be a need for design. Rather naively I felt that good design would sell the best. It was a year or two later that I realized that bad designs sell the most!

Being married with two children forced me, for the first time in my life, to be responsible for others other than myself. It was one thing to virtually starve alone and eke out a day to day existence while at the same time painting and putting all one's resources into the activity of painting - it was another thing to provide for a family. I was therefore forced to produce something that had a chance of selling on an international market. The difficulty was that when I was young I had always reacted negatively to design and decoration. I could not see the point of it. I preferred nature. My grandfather on my mother's side was, I thought, a rather boring academic painter. He also made a living as a textile designer. According to my Mother he was very lazy and during the last twenty years of his life he was content to continue selling his old design collections without bothering to produce anything new. This was possible given the kind of design that he excelled in, old English roses, many of which are still being used on chintzes today. His activity (or non-activity) was in marked contrast to my lifestyle. Apart from my grandfather, my mother also continued the aesthetic tradition by designing hats for Paris collections. I therefore had a background but it was a background of which I did not approve and so, in entering the design field, I had to make something of which I did approve and which related to and came out of my activity as a painter. When I finally started to design I produced two designs per day, complete with repeat and colour ways, continuously for several months before going on tour for a selling trip.

We began our collaboration with very few assets. We had the small studio in Västergatan in Gothenburg and we had a table which was about one metre square. We needed a light-box for copying purposes and for inspecting screens - a tea chest lined with silver paper and a couple of ordinary light bulbs sufficed. Much later in Marstrand we had a light box built which was bigger than any we encountered in factories. So we began to print in a somewhat revolutionary

manner by drawing directly on the screens and, at the same time, we freed the screens from the static print which enabled us not only to compose a design but to work out the repeat and colourways.

I have no means of telling whether Bomberg would have approved of this activity either in the painting or the design or the decorative field. I know it approximates to his idea that all art is design, but design in itself has a different orientation with different kinds of composition. That is to say, the way the marks are organized can be either a form of titivation as in simple design or more complicated in the case of decorative marks or, when they become sophisticated, it leads to a meaningful idea which is a painting. I had to be sure of the different approach and the different strategies to be used and to differentiate between the purpose and function of 'painting proper' as against our work in design and the large scale murals were made to be used for public places. Bomberg thought that artists should be capable of emulating Michelangelo and be able to turn their hand to anything - to design, to architecture, as well as to sculpture and painting - and he always insisted that the basis of everything was drawing. Sadly Bomberg never had the chance to put these ideas into practice. In 1936 he offered to make decorations for the 'Queen Elizabeth,' which he envisaged as a set of panels depicting the Ancient Monuments of Britain, but his offer was never taken up. However he did some work with book illustration and he remained proud of the fact that he was a card carrying member of a graphic trade union. In 1945, Dorothy Mead and I assisted him in making a theatre decor at the City Literary Institute where he then taught.

My belief was that, as Bomberg had taught, drawing was fundamental to both painting and design. Drawing was all important in our work and it was for this reason that we were able to make a unique contribution to textile design, both in Sweden and England. As most textile design and wallpapers were printed in the factories with the silk screen printing methods, it was logical to think in terms of drawing directly on the screens and evolving both the design concept and the repeat and the colour ways through these screens. This to me was very basic, but we were astonished to find within a couple of years we had revolutionized the attitude to design in Sweden, away from a geometric oriented concept towards more organic forms.

What we had not realized was that it was almost impossible for a freelance designer to exist by selling designs in one country, as we were trying to do in Sweden. In England there were 150 possibilities for selling flat surface design but, of those, only about thirty would accept modern designs. In Sweden there were only five or ten factories dealing with flat surface design and they mostly had their own resident designers. These resident designers used our designs for their own purpose; they adapted them and made numerous variations on the same theme. Their names appeared on the salvage and they had the advantage of the factories' promotion and publicity capacity. That is why we never became really famous as we were never quoted or given due credit for our innovations in the various publications dealing with the development and history of Swedish flat surface design. Our production was so prodigious that we made at least two designs complete with repeats and colourways per day. But the problem for us was how to sell and where to sell. We had to sell not only in Sweden and England but also in Denmark, Finland, Norway, Germany, Holland, France and America (we even sold one or two in Australia).

As our production increased, the studio was becoming too small for our requirements and as Lisa and I, by that time, were married and had a baby, our living conditions had to be improved as well as a larger studio being necessary. Our living conditions were so basic that, at first, we had only one room with an outside toilet with no central heating and one small stove

for cooking. But when we increased this to two rooms even this was totally inadequate and so we decided to move out to the island of Marstrand. In the fifties Marstrand was an impoverished run-down small town which only came to life during six weeks in the summer, when it was filled with tourists. Here we found both a modern flat and an adequate studio and so, in 1959, we moved.

Our studio became known as Marstrand Designers, specializing in flat surface design and wall paintings and decorations for public buildings. We had a motto on the wall taken from Ruskin which went: "Industry without Art is Brutality." Another motto was: "Work is Love made Visible."

We gradually raised our selling to 20% of our production, which was extremely high. This was mostly in factories in Sweden and England. With the 80% we had left over we used to go to Holland and Germany where prices were much cheaper - around £10 at that time compared with £70 or £80 in England - and we would sell off quite a number of designs to the worst end of the trade.

Around 1961-62, we were awarded a Cotton Board prize and later a Design Centre Award for the best design of the year, which was presented to me by Prince Philip. In the same year we gained an award for a wallpaper printed by Lightbown Aspinall of Stockport. This was the second award which we had won in America; the first being for a graphic silk screen print in 1959. In total, Lisa, Maj and I won over a dozen design awards and prizes from competitions in the industry between 1956 and 1963.

My reputation as a designer was supported during the 1950's by a series of international exhibitions which demonstrated the way I was using silk-screen printing in my graphic art. The serigraphs which I began to make in 1952 were shown in London as early as 1954 and, in 1956, I contributed to an exhibition called 'British Serigraphs' at the Institute of Contemporary Art. Between 1956 and 1958 my work was included in the 17th, 18th and 19th 'Annual International Exhibition' which was organised by the National Serigraph Society in America. These exhibitions were held at the Meltzer Gallery, New York, and my work was awarded 3rd Honourable Mention in 1956 and 1st Honourable mention in 1958.

In 1957 fourteen of my prints were included in 'British Abstract, Tachiste and Metaphysical Painters' at the Redfern Gallery, 20 Cork Street, London (4th April - 4th May). In the same year my graphic art was shown in two other mixed exhibitions, one in Munich and the other at the Shipley Art Gallery in Yorkshire.

In 1958 I had one work in a print exhibition at the A.I.A. Gallery, on Lisle Street off Leicester Square, which was run by the Artists International Association. Also in that year I had a number of prints in a travelling exhibition, called 'British Graphic Art,' which I organised in Sweden for the St. George's Gallery (7 Cork Street, London). This was followed by another exhibition in 1959 called '13 Brittiska Grafiker' (which was organised in the same way).

In 1959 my work was included in a mixed exhibition called 'The Graven Image' at the Whitechapel Gallery in London and, at the same time, some of my watercolours were included in a travelling exhibition in America called 'British Aquarelles.' Of course, in listing my activities as an exhibiting printmaker over this period, I have not mentioned my involvement in many other exhibitions where I showed my paintings.

Apart from these exhibitions of my graphic work, in 1959, I had some success with a large painting called 'Entombment' which was selected for The John Moores Exhibition in Liverpool. This painting was chosen as one of twenty-five which were submitted to a second jury to compete for the main prize. The Observer's art critic, Neville Wallace, gave my painting a favourable review and suggested that it should have been awarded the prize.

In 1955 I exhibited at the Public Library in Manchester and in 1959 I had another exhibition there, which included silk screen prints as well as my paintings. It was reviewed by Brian Bradshaw for the Bolton Evening News (Saturday, 30th May, 1959).

'Paintings and Silk Screen prints on View'

An exhibition of paintings and silk screen prints by Cliff Holden is being shown in the lounge of the Library Theatre, Manchester, until June 19th.

Mr. Holden is a reputable artist who worked with the late David Bomberg. He now lives in Sweden. In recent years he has exploited the potential of silk screen printing as a fine art form and he is one of the innovators in producing from this commercial process fine colour prints.

Those who heard his broadcast talk on David Bomberg some months ago will recollect a forthright personality, who expressed his ideas with convincing clarity. He often writes articles and criticism for several Swedish publications and has exhibited many times in England, America and Sweden. He was born in Manchester and occasionally comes to visit his mother, who lives in Wilmslow - hence this exhibition which has been arranged in passing.

Manchester is a city well known for a good orchestra and bad painters. Its liberal tradition rarely extends to the recognition and support of good visual art. So it is easier to understand why Cliff Holden's exhibition should have escaped the advertisement and publicity it deserves. Even the Avant-garde-critic is slow to notice that there are some new "abstracts" in town! However, the interested persons will search them out, and behind hidden doors will find paintings and prints all concerned with a theme which has to do with the voluminous disposal of the human figure and the atmosphere containing it. They are not only the best "abstract" expressions that Manchester has seen for some time - but also very reasonably priced.

Scandinavian design has for years been regarded by the world as a 'style,' but what is this style? What are its essential characteristics? The answer is, of course, that there are none. Impulses in design are taken and interpreted from everywhere. Originally, however, the intention was quite different to the manipulation of style. It was a sensible, rational approach; a cultivated way of solving problems of the environment.

The Swedes and Scandinavians generally regard art as a medium for educating the senses - all five of them - a nourishment for the soul, just as essential as vitamins for the body. For them it is not a luxury for the few but a vital necessity for all people. By contrast, in England, people think that it is only the few who ought to have access to art. People are largely indifferent and the factories are busy feeding that indifference under the guise of giving the people what they want.

As we know, individuals and institutions like the Design Centre have made considerable progress, but it is a drop in the ocean. The takeover bids which started in the middle 60's were largely retrogressive and they marked a triumph for the economic men, who are totally indifferent to design.

In Sweden, I have often found it necessary in articles to define the difference in approach and function between handicraft, industrial design and the so-called fine arts. For in Sweden, as also in America and Britain, largely through the activities of the pop painters and the minimalists, one can say that most of this century's artists are in danger of assuming the role of the designer. It was due to Bomberg's influence that, when I couldn't sell paintings and when I married and had children and was forced to face the reality of earning a living, I found it possible to collaborate with my wife and her partner in making flat surface design for industry. However, I applied the same basic principles to designing, or silk screen printing, as I did to drawing and painting. But in order to do the different activities I had to establish in my mind the differences both in the activity and in the function.

We know that any mark on a flat surface splits that surface and creates a certain kind of space. This is the link between design, decoration and painting as 'fine art' - but it also indicates the difference. Different kinds of space are operating - one simple, the other complex; so complex in fact that the artist is no longer dealing with space, that is to say virtual space, but with ideas of space, and consequently with meanings, which of course becomes a form of communication, a kind of language.

Design as such has no meaning and even in the area of design we reject all anecdotes as in painting. We reject geometry, mathematics, illusions of space by tone or formal shading and even the curls and arabesques of leaves as in William Morris. But like Morris, we are careful to organize every line or point over the surface so that the termination of each motif creates a negative as well as a positive space.

However Morris tended to regard the decorative elements as ends in themselves and ignored their function. His designs for wallpaper should be looked at vertically and not in small bits as in a book. Typography stands in direct relation to the book as an object and is observed horizontally, but wallpaper acts in space vertically and must bend with or resist the pull of gravity. A good wall covering can act in such a positive way that it becomes a space developer, enhancing the spatial arrangement already started by the architect. Good surface design therefore continues and extends the function of architecture.

Question 3.5: Your commissions on a large scale have required team work and how is this worked out? Well, the fact is that often I have carried out very large projects alone. However when we started Marstrand Designers the three of us worked together. Very small designs were usually carried out by a single designer but then they were often worked on by all three of us. So, although our separate names appeared and we were credited as individuals for having made each design, nevertheless it was team work.

Mostly the actual drawing and printing and colourways were made by me and the planning of the repeats were made mostly by Lisa and Maj Nilsson. They were much cleverer than I was at measuring whereas I was better at drawing and printing and colouring. For example, I can explain how we worked together to develop one of Maj Nilsson's designs, called 'Calligraphy,' which won a prize from Sandersons and which was for many years one of their best selling designs, second only to William Morris. It was started by Maj making a squiggle, an abstract line, which I re-drew, developed, composed and printed and then I added a vertical movement of stipple against the horizontals. In fact I made so much work with it that I have always regarded it as my own design. The impulse from the original line was similar to the impulse which led Leonardo to develop an idea from observing damp stains on a wall, or the way Daumier worked by making random lines which finally evoked the form of a figure or a face.

When I came to settle in Sweden in 1956, it seemed quite natural to collaborate with Lisa Gronwall and her partner, Maj Nilsson. At that time, they were mostly weaving textile designs but I was able to introduce them to silk-screen printing and we began to design through the print medium for textiles, carpets, wallpaper and so on. At first we were sharing space and materials because it was an economic necessity, but very soon we began to collaborate very closely. One of us might start a drawing and another would do the printing or the colourways and so we parted up the activity, which relieved some of the monotony and boredom and created an intensity which, when one is alone, is very difficult to achieve. Often a design started as just a doodle or a very brief sketch from nature or as a squiggle or an elegant line and then we would develop it, draw it onto the screen, add texture and print it. Of course, the three of us came out into the public image as a unit under the name of Marstrand Designers, but with a curtain or a wallpaper we could not always have this collective name on the salvage. The various firms insisted only on their name plus the personal name of the designer, so we lost out very often on the advertising front.

In time the group activity became enlarged to include apprentices and students. I found our collaboration much easier to deal with in drawing and design and decoration than in more complex painted images, which were enveloped in mystery and which often came about through accident and hazard. Design was easier in so far as it was largely concerned with forms designed for a specific purpose. Design and structure were scientifically analyzed in terms of function so that the forms would operate in a certain way in relation to a given situation. And so here we were dealing less with the spirit and more with the environment.

I think one curious thing about my character is that I have always been an individualist and a loner, whether it has been in the activities of science, religion, philosophy or art. But at the same time, the contradiction is that I have always sought to collaborate with others. This took the form of syndicalism in politics and discussion groups in religion, whether it was with Quakers or later with Jesuits and philosophers. Thus, I was no stranger to Bomberg's collaborative ideas, especially as his ideas also coincided with my previous studies of Bishop Berkeley.

As an artist I have practically always worked in some form of team work, starting with Bomberg himself, where we would often work on the same painting. This idea astonished Micheltore and Oxlade, who never understood what was happening and were incapable of developing the image after Bomberg had worked on it. They were incapable of turning the image into their own concept. After Bomberg's death and the breakup of the Borough Group, I continued to collaborate with Dorothy Mead. We lived together for eleven years but even after our separationllk we would still often work on paintings together and this continued right up until her death in 1975. We would often work from an identical motif or from the same drawing or photograph. Dorothy also worked very closely with Dennis Creffield.

As I have pointed out before, the team, Marstrand Designers, came about almost by accident, but the collaboration proved invaluable because we had to work rapidly in order to produce enough designs each day and consequently we were able to survive whereas most textile designers had to fall back on some other income for support.

In the last few years we have been assisted by our son Thomas. He is a painter in his own right. He has exhibited since he was 16 years old and we have collaborated, on and off, for many years. In fact this activity started at the age of two when he used to paint on my paintings as well as on the floor. I remember when Thomas and my daughter Isabella were still very young, I was doing a very large wall using very large flower motifs and, for some obscure reason, I couldn't get the right-hand section of this large area to function, so I asked the children

what colour the flower should be. They both said: "Green." And so I said: "OK, go ahead, paint it"; which they did and the result was absolutely right. This incident has always been something of a mystery to me.

I have always been aware and have often said that Lisa tended to underplay in our collaboration. She put the brake on my excesses so that, in the end, it worked out about right for the general public. Thomas also tends to underplay and with him tone tends to dominate over structure. It is as though he has matured too quickly. As Bomberg used to say, the preoccupation of old men is with the bloom on the baby's bottom or the surface of an apple. But this again, the marriage of structure and tonal nuance, while sometimes engendering a certain conflict of interest, nevertheless, produces a result which is right for the job and the situation.

One of the great values of team work is that it helps to get rid of the boredom engendered during a lot of the preliminary work and, with close collaboration and a certain competitiveness, there is that stimulus as in a dialogue. Then again, of course, in some cases it is necessary to have at least a second pair of hands in the handling of the material and the setting up of the walls. After all, some of our walls are at least six or seven metres wide and some seventeen or eighteen metres high and thirty-five metres long, so it is a great physical effort just in the handling of the materials alone.

Serigraphy and Design

Silk-screen printing is a versatile medium that can mean a lot of things to a lot of people. The uninitiated tend to think of it as a cross between a painting on silk and the cinema screen. For the professional it does the job that you require it to do. To the advertiser it gives the best and brightest displays suitable for large posters or Corn Flakes packets. He can work with speed on urgent out-size jobs. For the print-maker it is the medium that most faithfully reproduces the work of the artist and for the textile manufacturer it is ideal for short exclusive runs of 5,000 to 10,000 metres of hand or Boozer machine-printed fabrics. To the painter it is the print medium that corresponds more closely than any other to the paint and canvas. Later, I propose to explain my own attitude and need for screen-printing where I developed a process through print which is akin to painting in being a mobile technique (in this sense, similar to Action Painting) and which can be used for making large murals or small one-off variations on a theme or which may be used in the evolution of a form, using the screen in a similar way to the way a mono-type is used, the difference being that the image can be preserved and printed if required.

When applied to design, the great advantage of using the screens is that you can design on and through the print medium, exploiting all its possibilities, instead of making small drawings, which are then blown up bigger mechanically and translated into print terms and which lose vitality in the process.

We believe that good designing, like painting, is complete in itself and none of the parts can be subtracted without the whole disintegrating. Therefore, we dismiss as bad those designs which are anecdotal, illustrative, or which can be split into parts where any part could be taken away and blown-up to make another design. We believe the essential relation of people to design is physical. We believe there is a profound connection between the man and the certain kinds of marks which he makes - just as there must be a certain response to those marks from the public, irrespective of the literary or geometric meaning that can be read into the marks. When marks and colours split the surface of a fabric, then the surface is excited and a simple space begins to operate. The marks relate to the material of the fabric, to the dimensions of the fabric, to the architectural space around and to all the things in it, like the furniture etc. There is also a space relation, which is controlled by gravity. Thus the design and decoration in a mural will create a simple space, not only embellishing but also extending the architectural space, which is the actual space.

By comparison the painting proper has a complex space which is protected by a frame from the architectural or actual space. Design and decoration have no meaning other than what they are. They are oriented to the pleasure principle. Painting activity, on the other hand gives rise to a complex space and a meaningful image which, in order to communicate to the consumer, must be protected from the environment. Paintings should never be used as decorative elements. This is like using a metre of books on a shelf for a splash of colour in an interior (as often happens in England), instead of recognizing that both the paintings and the books are not made to be looked at but to be read. We have rejected the limitations of the geometric motives which gives rise to boredom. Mathematical proportions are also repetitive and limited. We believe the essential organic qualities of lines and marks are not necessarily to be found in their straightness; circles are not more harmonious because they are a closed unit.

What I think I gained from Bomberg was an approach to the manipulation of space and light and, above all, the use of movement. This, for example, set us apart from William Morris. It was not directly from Bomberg because he never taught us graphic, but I think his ideas influenced me greatly when I started to work with silk-screen. Bomberg had never mentioned silk-screen and I don't think that he ever used it himself, but it was from his attitude to painting that I developed the idea of manipulating the screens and using them in what I have since called 'action printing.' I have described this in a little more detail elsewhere and I think this is a good example of Bomberg's ideas stimulating and liberating one's activity to something totally different to the kind of activity that he himself was restricted to.

But it was much more than a technical development. When we freed the screens from static printing and when we found that it was possible to combine print with the paint stroke then everything became possible. Then we found that such a freedom gave rise to the use of chance and hazard and of accident and, thus, happenings occurred. Our son Thomas took part in this activity and it became like a game of chess. Each made a move and the move either continued or contradicted the previous move. Of course on some occasions there was a certain conflict, a clash of wills, which came from differences in taste and, in the case of Thomas, a striving after the illusion of perfection. This kind of push and thrust gave rise to endless possibilities. Every move was countered with another move. The endless and unlimited decisions taken inevitably gave rise to unpremeditated images and something of the mystery of painting came back into our murals. I think this contributed largely to our success. The elimination of anecdote, illustration, and repetition made the final product less boring than most murals.

In painting we were concerned always with the mass but, with other decorative patterns, we were more concerned with the movement in nature, with contours and with detail. Although quite often we would use the same motifs, the composition was always different. If we used leaves or trees, it was obvious that they were leaves and trees. But when it came to using the motif of birds, we manipulated them in such a way that they could be interpreted either as birds or as clouds or as sea and sometimes a combination of all three. The ingredient common to all the motifs was movement and it was through movement that we established our colour and tone. The painted image on the other hand, came about through the relations in movement between the artist - the painter - and the object and also with a great dependence on the movement of light which was exactly the opposite way that Monet worked before 1890.

In modern times silk-screen has, for the most part, been associated with mass-production commercial techniques. It is not, however, an essentially modern invention. It was invented some 2,000 years ago in China and in all its manifestations it can be said to be a development of the simple stencil. In recent years, especially in America, France and Scandinavia, many painters have recognized the value of the screens and the process has reverted to its original function, a print by-product of the artist, which can be bought comparatively cheaply by the general public. With this in mind, Fernand Leger, just previous to his death, was issuing 1,000 copies of each print. In England they were sold at Liberties.

Briefly, silk-screen consists of stretching a piece of silk or synthetic fibre on to a frame similar to stretching a canvas. You can do everything yourself and, compared to other mediums, it is cheap. Stencils of paper or film are stuck on to the silk surface. But a more fundamental and basic way of working is to draw directly on the screen with lithographic chalk, a photo-engraving glue or bees wax ... in fact anything greasy. I have even used margarine in an attempt to simulate brush strokes. There are various mediums one can use to stop out the surface ranging from photo-engraving glue to the German photo-light Astra-Sol method (the Japanese

have an even better solution). When the surface is dry you wash out the drawn parts with paraffin, turpentine or thinners. Then the image is fixed and colour is then pressed through the open parts so that this produces the printed image. Any number of screens can be used in coordination to extend and build up the single image. The great advantage of the screens is that every image can be preserved; you take another screen to continue or extend the image. Thus one avoids over-working as can be the case with an etching or a dry-point.

Silk-screen has not been used extensively by painters in England, partly one suspects because they do not realize the immense creative potential of the medium and this is in spite of the fact that I was responsible for introducing it to London in the mid-fifties. John Coplans plied me with drink and then he plied me with questions all night on my way of using the screens, all of which, with the help of a hidden microphone behind a curtain, he recorded. Then, without my permission, he sold the idea to Robert Erskine of the St. George's Gallery, who included Coplans in a film of graphic techniques. Unfortunately, Coplans completely misunderstood my ideas and interpreted them the opposite way round so that what he described were commercial techniques. Erskine did not help to popularize the medium by stressing in the press the cheapness and ease of printing and pointing out that so much of what had been done could have been done better in lithography, etching or wood cut. This was largely true, of course, regarding his own exhibition but what he should have said was that silk-screen was such a versatile medium that it could do what all the other mediums could do and more. Here is Erskine's review of the exhibition 'British Serigraphs' which he organised at the I.C.A. in 1956:

'Serigraphy' (Institute of Contemporary Art)

Serigraphy, or silk-screen as it is more descriptively called, is demonstrated in this exhibition, through the work of artists whose temperament is concomitant with the capabilities of the medium. As a collection of prints it needs yet to be supplemented by the work of other artists: it is partly the purpose of the show to interest the tyro printmaker in this branch of print-making. This is not to say that what this exhibition has to offer has not quality; for the artists represented show prints of a fine standard, both in their conception and their execution. For they have realised that silk-screen has both its advantages and its limitations, and accordingly have striven to retain the full benefit of a new and volatile medium.

Elsewhere in the world (and frankly in Britain silk-screen has arrived rather late) artists and dealers have seen in silk-screen a method of making prints cheaply and easily, so that much of what has been done would have been done better in lithography, etching, or woodcut. But I am glad that silk-screen has such a well-tempered introduction to the British public in this exhibition.

The exhibition is due to John Coplans, who has set up a workshop for silk-screen in the hope that artists may be attracted to experiment with the medium. Coplans himself shows two prints of great strength, in which the blacks are deep as velvet, and the edges of the colour areas crisp as toast. Frank Avray Wilson shows two brash prints which powerfully exploit the dry opacity of the thick ink. William Turnbull has found unexpected subtleties in his images through silk-screening them, and Alan Davie has been enabled to work *maestoso* without the tedious limitations of a more painstaking medium. Cliff Holden, who seems to be the pioneer in England of silk-screen, shows a shadowy image which demonstrates yet another, more mysterious, indigenous quality.

Coplans had set up a printing studio and made a small fortune printing editions of the images of other artists. The only image in the exhibition that did not come out of Coplans print-shop was my own. This was one of 50 prints that I left with Erskine on sale or return, without written contract, together with a few other images. They have never been returned to me and neither did I receive any money even for one that I had proof was sold to a professor at University College.

Despite the efforts of the St. George's Gallery, galleries and critics in England do not recognize it as a distinct graphic medium and there is no commercial or official encouragement as in America or Scandinavia. In America, the National Serigraph Society holds exhibitions and competitions and generally promotes sales and interest. Critics when faced with silk-screen usually describe the work as lithographs or mono-types and even as water-colours or oil paintings. It has not been taught in schools and only in recent years has it appeared in art schools (but in a commercial form as an adjunct to craft, advertising and industrial needs) and, of course, Warhol's playing around with the photograph of Marilyn Monroe's head continues to confuse the issue.

The film 'Artist's Proof,' produced by Erskine, sets out to explain to the lay-man the kind of work involved in the various graphic processes. Unfortunately, the section on silk-screen is fragmentary and gives an altogether erroneous idea of the value of the screens to the painter. As the information was supplied by Coplans the emphasis was on the cheapness and the industrial and commercial applications, ranging from advertising to fabric printing. It also emphasized the modernity and speed of the method whereas in reality it is just as laborious as any other graphic method. A textile is shown as an illustration of the way the screens are used in industry. The next shot shows Coplans drawing a stencil on the screen with fish-glue. Thus one is left with the impression that Coplans methods are synonymous with the procedure for the printing of fabrics in industry. In fact they are opposite methods. Coplans is drawing with glue which produces a negative image whereas in industry, a photographic method is used which is invariably printing a positive image. Together with most painters I use both positive and negative images combined in several processes to produce the final meaningful image. The film showed to advantage the intense colour values that can be produced and the way proofs can be made with colour variations of the same image, but no indication is given of the immense range of the medium; the precision on the one hand, as in newspaper photographs and extremely delicate etched line drawings which can be printed, or the possibilities latent in the medium for the continuous development of the image by the artist during the work on the screens. The aim is not, as in most graphic mediums, to reproduce by copying an existing image, but to use an existing image as the jumping off point for continued exploration and development, or, better still, to use the screens as the canvas on which the first marks of the evolving image are made. Thus the screens are used not as a copying printing process but as a creative process in the way that paintings are made. This is my approach.

For some years I had had a certain frustration in painting; a concern with mass, space and movement led me to think of time elements. This led inevitably to thinking in terms of film, moving film and cinema. My dream was to extend painted images into actual movement. But I lacked the necessary expertise and, above all, I lacked the capital. A year or two later, I saw the films of Luciano Emma. Emma made use of the actual paintings by Goya and Piero della Francesca by merely selecting areas of the painting and simulating movement by a movement of the camera. But I wanted to use my own images directly on or through the film, editing thousands of related images in a dramatic continuity; a grand combination, a symphony of virtual and actual movement of forms. There would be no narrative, no decor and no music but

only pure form and pure film. I had already found parallels with my work and that of the dancer and choreographer Noa Eshkol. About this time, there were people working directly on film, either sketching or painting, but this was confined to advertising or cartoon films. Creativity was confined to the caricature and the storyboard. In the late sixties, Clouzot used Picasso in a film of his paintings. Again, however, he used existing paintings or Picasso doing a circus act drawing on glass or with lights. Picasso's clowning had little to do with the creative process. As film was too expensive, it was necessary to find a substitute. There is an old Chinese saying which goes ... "when the student is ready, the master appears." It was thus with me. Almost by accident I was introduced to silk-screen by Torsten Renquist and Sven Olof Ehren. They were using the screens as a conventional reproductive medium but they soon tired of it and reverted to making etchings, wood-cuts and lithographs. For an hour they taught me how to construct a screen and how to manipulate it.

My first print was a copy of a Picasso lithograph. I immediately recognized that the medium had unique qualities; more fluid and mobile than the etching and lithograph, and more durable and capable of constructive development than the monotype. It could also be a partial substitute for the film, not in terms of movement but by preserving the countless images that are lost during the creative process while painting. One of the major problems in painting is that after the first marks, that split the canvas to form the first elements, a simple space comes together to produce the first simple image. In continuing, the space relations become more complicated and sophisticated and thus a series of elements come together to form a unique image which the painter has difficulty in recognizing. Not only is he unaware of its significance but he is often shocked, so that he quickly destroys what he has made, in favour of a known cliché without import. Thus vital images are lost simply because a created image is difficult to recognize. Bomberg always said that it is not your creative potential that needs developing by the master but your critique. The critical faculty always lags behind your creative potential. The painter invariably preserves the image he recognizes which is usually a repetition of himself or an imitation of somebody else. Images so easily evaluated are contrived and made rather than created. One works within a set of known values so that it is no longer an art activity but a craft. The aim is towards perfection but there is no perfection in art; even truth is illusive. As R.G. Collingwood puts it in his book *The Principles of Art* (Oxford University Press, 1938): "First we direct our attention towards a certain feeling, or become conscious of it. Then we take fright at what we have recognized, not because the feeling as an impression is an alarming impression, but because the idea into which we are converting it proves an alarming idea. We cannot see our way to dominate it, and therefore shrink from persevering in the attempt. We therefore give it up and turn our attention to something less intimidating." In fact we turn to the security of something we recognize. It is therefore in order to preserve vital images that I use the screens, not as a reproductive or print process but as a tool, as another kind of brush and canvas, drawing directly on the screen and laying the colour on, as with another kind of brush, which is impossible with the static character of other print mediums.

Later instead of blowing up a small sketch to make a large design (which was the usual commercial practice) we developed the use of the screens for designing textiles directly on the screen so that the design arose out of the activity with the materials and the medium. Then we applied the same principles in making large scale murals. Because the screens are cheap and relatively easy to manipulate, one is able to control the whole process without being at the mercy of the craftsman's interpretation. The countless variations of colour and form would be almost physically impossible and certainly uneconomic to do in paint. One is able to prove the kind of colour and tone peculiar to the image until the image is destroyed by the force of the colour in favour of a new image. Thus new forms demand new colours and new colours seek a

new structure. Therefore the primary object of the work is to clarify the problem. The cheap print is not the primary aim but the by-product of the activity. The disadvantage of the screens compared with painting is that the mechanics tend to make one self-conscious which mitigates against spontaneous feeling.

The vital image is always in the proof-print and it is a curious fact, which bears out the previous remarks concerning the critical faculty, that faced with a choice of images to be made into a numbered set of prints one invariably chooses the least vital and the least interesting. The dealer tends to isolate the repetitive aspect of print and in fact elevates it to a basic virtue. Sameness is quality whereas in art differentiation is what it is all about. The dealer thinks he is responding to public demand ... Mrs. Brown must have a frock exactly like Mrs. Jones, forgetting that even fashion demands change and differentiation. The discerning collector regards the proof-print as a valuable addition to his collection. Apart from its quality, it is a better investment. But, of course, if one makes a large number of proofs, the price need not be higher than one of a numbered set.

There is a notion prevalent today that an artist can be a draughtsman and therefore a graphic artist without the necessity of first being a painter. Like the opposite view that many minimal artists do not need the discipline of drawing or painting, this notion is truly contemporary and it has no precedent in history. The result is that many graphic artists are really technicians producing prints with literary, illustrational and anecdotal mannerisms which have no relevance today when there are so many other mediums that can do the job better. Some graphic artists use black and white graphics because they are intimidated by colour forgetting that black and white is colour. There should be essentially no difference in approach between drawing in black and white and the whole gamut of colour. Painting is essentially drawing with colour; designing, building, constructing the form and then the colour fits together like a glove on the hand. Delacroix said colour is nothing if it is not right for the picture and, as Collingwood has pointed out, Cezanne was right when he said that painting was essentially a physical activity; a man does not paint with his eyes but with his hands. A painter paints what can be painted and what can be painted must stand in some relation to the muscular activity of painting it. It is this physical aspect of silk-screen which establishes it as the medium for the painter today.

Question 2.1: I draw a sharp line between Art and Designing. Why? Well, the short answer to this is that art is one thing and designing is another. Art is idea giving meaning - a meaningful idea - whereas design is not an idea and it doesn't mean anything. It is merely a titillation of the senses. But I also make a differentiation between design and so-called decoration. I don't like the word 'decoration' but we have to use it for want of anything better. Then, of course, there is a distinction between art and craft. Craft is something which is designed and executed for a particular use, a particular function, whereas art has no function except as a form of communication dealing with the spirit and the senses. Nevertheless it should be remembered that all work on a flat surface is designing, composing with marks, and drawing is the basic activity common to all, whether it be design as such or decoration or painting. But as I hope I have made clear, it is the intention and the eventual function of the marks which determines their character and relationship.

Now I propose to deal with Question 2.3 regarding materials of painting and whether they are important for me or merely a means to an end. Well, the simple answer is that they are a means to an end, but of course you do have to choose the material that is most suitable for what

you intend to do. There are limitations to any of the mediums but we do have the dubious advantage over the old masters in having a much greater range of colours and new mediums such as acrylics. The obvious advantages of acrylics are outweighed by certain disadvantages in relation to oil painting, for example, in oils, mixing ultramarine and crimson makes a rich black and then by adding white one can have a whole range of pinks and purples - this just does not work in acrylics. This is just one example among several so that one has to have a totally different attitude depending on which medium one decides to work with. I work with a somewhat basic attitude and I think I have said elsewhere that I invented - well, perhaps 'invented' is the wrong word - but I discovered or found out that certain things worked in a way that no one else had used before. For example, I found that I could print with acrylics so that the resulting print could be formed into a laminate. Furthermore I discovered by experiment that I could paint rather thick impasto paintings with acrylics which could also be laminated. This is possible because, when the acrylics dry, although the moisture evaporates and the cells come together, nevertheless, the cells remain porous. The chemicals (used under heat and high pressure in the process of lamination) are able to penetrate the acrylics as they should do. They are not blown back, as would happen if a sweaty thumb mark or an oil spot or any other solid matter had blocked the chemically impregnated papers that are used in this process. Many of my technical innovations were a result of observing accidents; for example, in using the screens as a palette, I would mix the colours directly on the screens, using wet and dry mediums, and I would dispense with the squeegee by using rags instead. So, by these methods, I could control the wetness or the dryness or even the different pressures required to produce different qualities of print.

Of course, this wasn't really using a means to an end; it just meant that it opened up all kinds of possibilities which could not be obtained by ordinary static printing. It is difficult to describe the process but one can say that I was using the Japanese kind of mark which resulted in what one could call action printing. It sounds like a contradiction in terms but it does function as a way of drawing, and what this really means is that you are composing on a flat surface within the four sides of the picture plane. They are the two limitations, the flat surface and the four sides; you then begin to play your game.

Flat surface design comes about by an arrangement of lines, forms and colours on a flat surface. These marks are eventually transformed into patterns for wallpapers, carpets, curtains and paper wrappings and these kinds of design have a myriad of different uses. They are even useful for the rag trade which some people call fashion. In terms of interior design, a simple activation (or titillation) of any visible surface will alter the relation of that surface to the architectural space of the room and, if the space relations of a room are harmonious, then it will feel more comfortable. So, if happiness is a measure of our lives and happiness is induced by release of tension, then design can contribute to that release. But people tend to associate happiness with security and they feel secure by being surrounded by bad design, that is to say, the sort of design filled with forms which are nostalgic with happy memories. In this respect good design often disturbs people. Because, all their lives, they have been conditioned by bad design, which has given them good feelings in the past, they feel insecure at first with any design if it is unfamiliar. But good design can give new delights for the senses and new harmonies whereas bad design can irritate and create nervous tension, because it encroaches and contradicts the architectural space.

Decoration and ornamentation is designed to give pleasure by direct and simple contact with the senses. This happens when we look at a flower, a sunset, a beautiful nude or when we are taking a glass of sherry and this is what I have called "the cakes and ale outlook." The marks

that make up a decoration are meant to work out into the room and, thereby, not simply add an embellishment to the architecture but make the architectural space itself feel larger. Bad decoration diminishes the space and, again, people become nervous.

When we come to 'art proper' in the making of a painting, the space relations become very complicated and sophisticated. We are now dealing not with a relation to actual space but entirely with virtual space. The primary concept of virtual space comes at the first stroke of the brush. This concentrates the mind entirely on the picture plane and, by composing with a design and a rhythm, the act of painting can produce complicated results in terms of space relations. Then there is an idea which is brought into consciousness and gives meaning. In other words it communicates and what it communicates is the content. The painting must be protected and so the idea must be enclosed in a frame to separate the marks from the architectural space. The emotion generated by a work of art is not practical and it does not necessarily, nor often, give pleasure. In painting, we are concerned with the mass but in the decorative panels our interest is almost the opposite. That is to say, we are concerned with detail, with contours and with movement, but what the two activities have in common is a concern with movement. In the decorative panels the movement is the movement of the form in nature, but in painting the movement is the movement not only of the object but of the relationship of the object to the painter and this is further complicated by the movement of light.

I have no interest in the ideas of truth to material. There is no truth in material. Similarly, I am not interested in form expressing function or that material should be true to itself. In their time, the members of the Bauhaus were intent on making a revolution against classical architecture, against the baroque and even against art nouveaux which they considered to be false. I think the Bauhaus ideas resulted in a dreadful confusion between art, design and handicraft which has permeated the art schools in England since the early 50's. I prefer to use materials which are suitable for the job, which function, and in other words are efficient. But this efficiency cannot be demonstrated and must depend almost entirely on the integrity of the artist which brings us back to the moral question. As someone once pointed out, abstract thought withdraws from the world of concrete things as it becomes more efficient in describing reality.

The American philosopher, Marcuse, commenting on the mysterious link between so-called inner thought and outer reality, said that according to psycho-analytical theory - which I never quite believed in - there exists a mental plane of fusion between the self and the environment, where the boundary between the internal and external world is no longer certain. The outer perception and the so-called inner fantasy become one. At this point of fusion I like to think that an individual may have a precious opportunity to be true to himself. Truth to materials per se has nothing to do with it. I use materials that are necessary to further my intentions and not for their own sake.

The biggest problem for any artist is to accept a brief. It can be said that briefing is a kind of prostitution, that is to say that in 'art proper' there is always a full blooded, meaningful love affair. On my fiftieth birthday I was interviewed by the art critic Bernt Eklundh of Goteborgs Posten and during the course of the conversation I gave my definition of the term 'prostitution' in terms of design and its relation to 'art proper'. I refer to my design activity as a form of prostitution because as I have said it means that "I work to order to give pleasure for money." But when Eklund wrote his article he added that he believed that "Cliff added a large measure of love together with his prostitution." I was a little astonished about this, but when I thought about it, I thought this must be the reason why we have been able to succeed with design and

large scale decoration which is directed to a very large public. We gave them more than they asked for. We gave that little bit extra. But it is always something they are hardly aware of, as if it were subliminal.

Because the product must appeal to a very wide audience in all kinds of situations, one is forced to use marks, forms and colours that on the one hand are more generalized and in another way more scientific than the ones used in fine art. Because you know what these marks and forms are required to do in terms of manipulation of space for the public, this has more to do with the pleasure principle than with the muse. Working to a brief leads to compromise, the art of deception, and the technique of pretending to give what is required to people who know nothing of their own desires or the quality of their needs.

One would think that a very independent spirit and artist like Michelangelo would not readily have taken criticism from a patron. Edgar Wind (in *Art and Anarchy*, Faber and Faber, 1963, p.92) has pointed out that, nevertheless, Michelangelo "explained to his pupil Condivi, apparently with considerable warmth, that Pope Clementi VII had an exceptional understanding of the artistic process. It is evident that Michelangelo felt the pressure of his patron's will as beneficial, but it requires the resilience of a forceful artist to transform such an impact into art; weaker spirits might well be crushed by it." This refers to the planning of the Medici Chapel when the patron, who eventually became Pope Clementi VII, changed the plan many times. Even at the point when Michelangelo was in the process of cutting the stone, it was changed completely once more and the project started all over again.

However, there were times when Michelangelo found it necessary to overcome opposition in a subtle way. This is what we tend to call fooling the client for his own good. That is to say we give them something better than they deserve and something better than what they ask for. The patron came up to Michelangelo when he had almost finished his 'David' and objected to the largeness of the nose. Michelangelo immediately said he would reduce the size of the nose; he jumped up the scaffolding but on the way picked up a handful of dust. He hammered away at the nose carefully letting the dust trickle from his hand and then he came down and asked the patron what he thought of the nose now. "Excellent," said the patron and of course Michelangelo had not touched it. That is fooling the client for his own good.

Concerning working with textiles and decorative panels for buildings, I have often been asked whether I like working within these disciplines and these mediums and with which commissions have I been most pleased? I can't think of a single commission which has really pleased me. In nearly every case, by the time we have finished the commission, we nearly always want to start again. On completion, we know so much about the problem and, when we place it in its right situation, we can immediately see the strengths and the weaknesses of our work. When we work in the studio from architects' drawings the measurements on these drawings do not give any indication of the amount of light available and yet, if we had this information, it would influence the kind of marks we would make and we would work with a different tone and strength of colour.

In one way, this wanting to start again and make a new work is similar to the point where you leave a painting and start a new one, but the reasons are different. In the case of a painting, it is because you have come to the point of bringing an idea into fruition but to continue the painting would turn it into another idea; therefore you leave that canvas and take up a new canvas. But the desire to re-work a commission has nothing to do with idea. It has to do with practical things; with scientific analysis or whether you have performed functions most efficiently.

Sometimes we are fortunate in being able to continue the work when it is in place but mostly you have to deliver when the time is up. So invariably the point where you stop the work is not the point where you are satisfied but the point where there is no more time available. The most extraordinary thing is that when we are given one year to complete a work there is nearly always a rush at the end for completion. But, if the same work was given two years there would still be the same rush at the end. Of course, the same is true as of painting - perhaps if we had stopped after six months the result would have been just as efficiently executed.

Question 3.4: Do you like working with textiles and panels? This is one of those questions where one can answer 'yes' and 'no'; 'yes,' in the sense that you can enjoy the activity, 'yes,' in the sense that you have a feeling of satisfaction on doing a good job, but 'no,' when that good job involves function and efficiency instead of feeling and meaning. It is like the difference between the whore, the housewife and the lover.

Most other successful artists do not seem to have experienced this conflict to the same extent as I have because their economic problems, sales questions and contracts are taken care of by their agent or dealer. With this level of support there is nothing to hinder their relationship with the muse. With my work in design and decoration I have found that there is no time for the muse and only about ten per cent of one's time can be devoted to creating and executing a project. The bulk of the time is spent with contracts, telephones, meetings, planning, preparing the material, transport and the final setting up of the finished product. Curiously, as a result people that hitherto would have been uninteresting and quite alien to one's way of life have now become all important. One must face meetings with directors of industry, architects, engineers, carpenters, house painters, manufacturers of various products, planners and bureaucrats. Then there is the constant struggle with tax assessors and the state bailiffs, on which a separate book could be written.

Even before the contract is signed an enormous amount of time is spent in talking on the telephone, attending conferences, writing letters, making offers, working out costings and making drawings, prototypes and models. Many artists charge for this activity and for the sketches and models but we never do that as we have found that it relieves the architect of many problems in his relationship with the client. Neither do we add travelling expenses or delivery charges. The offer we make is inclusive and final.

Relating to Clients

One of our biggest customers in England was Heals in Tottenham Court Road. It was quite an achievement to sell there - sometimes we sold between six and eight designs per year - because the director, Tom Worthington, had a very astute idea. He would go to the Royal College of Art and there he would meet students who had been producing half a dozen designs over a two year period. He would pick out the best of them and present them in his collection and very often they won prizes - the same kind of prizes that I had just been winning. I remember one boy gained both the Cotton Board Award and the Design Centre Award in the same year and, of course, those students at college, having had such an early contact with industry, thought that their careers were made when they left the college. But the teaching at that time at the college did not take into account the needs of industry and it didn't prepare the students for the problems which they would encounter in the outside world. Obviously one expected the boy who won these two awards to have a brilliant career, but within two years of leaving college he was disillusioned. He couldn't sell enough to support himself and he ended up teaching in an obscure art school in Northampton. That was the state of the industry. Although we were enormously successful, nevertheless, when we finally ceased making designs for industry some eleven years later, we were not missed. Nobody called to find out why we were not presenting our twice-yearly collections. Incidentally, if I remember rightly, the name of the designer who opted out from the industrial rat race was Howard Carter.

When I come to think about it, I spent a tremendous amount of time in my Anglo-Swedish relations in introducing a large number of Swedish designers to the English market and English designers to the Swedish market. In the case of the Swedes, I actually included many of their designs in our collection and, with the English designers, I not only arranged tours and contacts and introductions but actually included one or two on our rare royalty contracts. The question of royalty and contracts, plagiarism and copyright, could merit a small book of its own. We had many disagreements with firms and organizations on these questions. One can see what an absurdity it is to apply copyright law to individual designs when, for example, in the case of a vertical design of leaves it is only necessary to turn one leaf down to circumvent the copyright.

When I started to design, I quickly realized that there was a potential market in industry but the activity had to be kept separate from the painting activity, even though it would run parallel. I also realized that art, like politics, was concerned with power but had to be tempered with compromise. Therefore, I compromised with design, but was very uncompromising with paint. Nevertheless, we fought many battles with industry. We were not prepared to compromise completely because our designs had to have a certain rightness; a rightness for the situation, a rightness for the kind of use that was to be made of them.

Regarding the buying of art for factory use or for public display in an environmental situation, I think UNESCO formulated some rules which were similar to my idea, that is to say, scrapping the outdated copyright question and substituting the question of buying the work of art outright. Both in Sweden and in England we negotiated for a contract to be drawn up which said briefly that industry - that is the manufacturer - did not own the design, and that he couldn't dispose of it as he wished but instead that he could only buy and own the right of use in the

specific situation that the design was made for. Then later, we fought for the decorative pieces and the murals so that they should not be moved to another situation without permission from the artist and, when their use in that situation came to an end, that they should not be destroyed but should be reverted back to the ownership and care of the artist. This means that the art, as an idea, is always the property of the artist and will not be prostituted or perverted, degraded or demolished, by clients and patrons simply because they have the money and the power to own the product. Incidentally, I don't care who copies me, so to speak, as long as they do it better. But of course doing it better means that they are doing something different, so it is no longer a copy for, as Bomberg once said, "he who follows someone's lead, will never surpass him."

Concerning the rights of the designer, copyright and the right of use, here is an article which I wrote at the time when we were in conflict with the lawyer representing our design organization.

In these days when so many people are involved in Freedom movements it comes as a surprise that there has been no reaction regarding the proposal to register designs put forward at a meeting, Vastra Kretsen, KIF, 11th April 1967 in Goteborg, by our advocate Inga Lindstedt-Piltz. At that meeting mine was the only dissenting voice.

Of course the idea sounds good. A register of designs. Each design registered to be paid for according to size, quality, value and length of time to be protected. Thus designer's creative rights will be protected for a small fee and his economic security assured. If, however, the question is examined we find that the idea is expensive, unworkable and contrary to the best interests of creative design. Put into practice this scheme would spell the death of design as it has been practiced throughout history. Of course we all know the problem. It is an economic one. It is an attempt to protect a designer's labours, to give more reward for the job, to cheat the stealers and give a greater degree of participation. In all these things it will fail. The real thieves will go on thieving, but relationships, trust and tolerance between designers will deteriorate. The fact is that the special problems of design, as design is a creative act, cannot be solved economically or legally ... it is more of a moral problem.

As a designer, one is not selling a quantity of things and operating like a salesman, classifying, numbering, checking, labelling etc. One is selling an idea ... the value of which is sometimes unknown, even to the originator, at the time of creation. The idea might be a small one or it might change and influence a whole era.

After all, we are dealing primarily with fashion and fashion presupposes similarities. A good bottle of Champagne is still a good bottle of Champagne, whether it is called Champagne or champagne type. It is not the ingredients or even the recipe that is registered and protected but the name. This kind of commercial practice is outside the province of the designer.

How could protection work? Who can judge the unique quality of a design? Does the uniqueness lie in the fact of it being a prototype and how could one register a style, a manner or a technique?

Registration will lead to all kinds of unfair treatment ... the more articulate, business minded, ruthless type of designer (and the one with the most spare capital) will be the first to rush to register. We all know that two designs can be made simultaneously in different parts of the world, such coincidences often occur in art and science. The rich or the successful designer is not always the best designer. The designer who places design before business could quickly be destroyed by the producers, the design coordinators and the

bureaucrats of design. It is for this reason the S.I.A. in England has banned paid advertising. Therefore instead of pushing each other to the wall, let everything exist ... the best will survive ultimately. If designs are accidentally produced simultaneously in New York, Vienna and Madrid, who is at fault? Nobody. If the designs are bad, there is no problem. If they are good then they will surely compliment each other in different markets.

However, in rejecting registration of a particular design as being negative and destructive in the design context, nevertheless, we must be constantly aware of the economic problems that have a greater bearing on the status of the designer and the kind of reward that he can expect from his labours. These rewards do not stop at the point when the design is sold. There are countless problems to be solved ...

The whole designer/producer relationship should be re-examined. Whether a designer is on royalty or not, he is interested in the fate of his designs ... he has a right to participate and to be involved in the decision making. There are unsolved problems of professional behaviour around production, promotion, advertising, salesmanship, qualities and faults in materials, technical faults, wastage, exhibition, credits and the name of the originator. Designs can be made or destroyed by the decision making.

A design that is registered, protected and sold outright complete with full copyright, leaves the way open to abuse and lack of responsibility on both sides. The originator must have some form of protection, not only for his ideas but for the quality of his ideas. There must be some form of protection from incompetent producers who think their responsibility ends once a design is paid for.

The copyright of a design should never be sold. The copyright should always remain the property of the originator. The originator's right to dispose of his ideas as he sees fit should be jealously guarded. What the originator should sell is merely the right of use for a particular and defined purpose. This right is then ceded to the producer for this limited purpose and for a limited period. This clause in a contract enables the originator to exercise a greater degree of control over the design's production. It is possible for the originator to gain more reward for each design. If it is wrongly or badly produced due to an incompetent director etc. then the originator has the right to offer the design for a new fee to the same producer for another purpose or to another producer or even to a rival firm that is capable of a better production.

Imitation in design is never very good and results in a weakening of the idea. The history of the arts is littered with imitators. In art this is inevitable and the discerning few recognize the quality of the original. The mass usually follows the imitators that are less vital, charming and yet harmless. But of course it is just this mass following which is vital for the industrial production. It is for these reasons that very often a producer will buy a good revolutionary prototype with no intention of putting it into production. Instead that prototype will form the basis and the inspiration for a whole series of designs from the factory studio. A whole new style or manner can be created from this prototype. It could enhance the designer's reputation but it might also destroy him if the imitations are continually preferred and exploited in preference to the original idea.

The designer has a right to participate and to receive some reward for his efforts. But there is little one can do to enforce his rights other than through contract, royalties and by raising prices and withholding copyright. It is a moral rather than a legal question. It is for the mutual advantage of both designer and producer to iron out some of these problems. There will always be those that do and those that imitate. No amount of legislation will change that. Let us therefore echo Sigvard Bernadotte in his speech during the British Week at the Design Symposium: "I don't mind who imitates me as long as they do it better."

The English designers we introduced to Sweden were Eddie Pond, John Wright, Robert Dodd, Francis Milward, Hume Chadwick, Althea McNish and her colleague from Trinidad, and thereafter almost yearly together with John Wiess, we arranged tours and introductions and actual selling points. I carried out a market research with the help of the Design Centre in England and found that there were about 150 possible outlets for flat surface design, that is textiles, wallpapers, carpets, paper coverings and so on. The Design Centre tried to be helpful by sending us out to visit customers all over the country. But nearly always it was a waste of time because, in drawing up the list of potential customers, they never distinguished between the various needs of the market. On the one hand there was the modern end of the market which we were interested in, but on the other hand the majority of the factories were churning out the same old-fashioned designs of the kind which my grandfather had once made (in fact they were still using some of his designs, even then).

One day I bought some beautiful and colourful African textiles in the Portobello Road and I took them to a Manchester factory where I asked why they couldn't print designs as exciting as these ones which had come from Africa. But they laughed at me and said that they did. They had, in fact, printed them. They were printed especially for the African market. They wouldn't have tried to market these designs in England because their salesmen had decided that they would not conform to British taste. They never did any market research to explore how British taste might be cultivated. Instead they imposed their own tastes on the public and so they continued to prefer old-fashioned designs. And so, out of the 150 possible outlets, there were perhaps only 20 or 30 that could be counted as actual potential customers for our work. Of these there were no more than 10 who were regular customers, buying on average between three and five designs per year.

The crisis came in the middle 60's with the big take-overs. The big companies like Sandersons, ICI and Courtaulds, annexed most of the small companies with the result that almost overnight the number of one's clients was drastically reduced but they did not increase the number of designs they bought. They were always wary, always careful, always knowing that they should not buy too many designs from one designer because there was always the next designer coming along with the possibility of a better design, or at least a more saleable design.

Apart from ICI, one of the worst culprits was Sandersons and at that point my friend Eddie Pond became studio manager with a director's responsibility. His philosophy was that the design which sells the most is the best design. I love the man but I hate his philosophy. Among others, he was responsible not only for reducing the market but for lowering the standards in the industry. It was a triumph of the economic men, but in one sense this was false. The Busby brothers - one at Sandersons and the other controlling the firm Lightbown Aspinall at Bredbury in Stockport - produced the Palladio Architectural range which was an absolutely fabulous range. Eddie Pond not only threw out both Busby brothers from the Sanderson studio but, also, Derek Healey. This act shocked most designers but it turned out quite lucky for Healey as he then set up his own colour consultancy which soon became an international success with offices not only in London but also in Geneva and Tokyo. Pond actually stopped production of the last range of the Palladio designs. It was argued that the Palladio range, although it appealed to architects, nevertheless made a loss. But they failed to realize that this range was, shall we say, a shop window, which raised standards all round and which increased sales of the so-called "bread and butter" ranges.

There were very few left in the industry outside this monopoly. But, because the monopoly lowered the standard of design, it gave the opportunity for several enterprising people who were concerned with quality design to start up small businesses. They were able to find a

gap in the market by supplying quality design which the monopoly was neglecting. One or two very small firms started up new businesses, for example, people like Hull Traders. There were a few good people who were already established who managed to resist the take-overs. In textiles there was Edinburgh Weavers and in wallpapers we worked with Shand Kydd, which was run by two brothers from their premises in Kentish Town. Peter Shand Kydd retired from the business and went off to Australia where he was a sheep farmer and subsequently he married Princess Diana's mother.

Of course, quality design in England was never marketed properly. To illustrate this, I will tell a little story which concerned my sister. She was redecorating her house so I suggested that we go to the big store in Manchester, Kendal Milne on Deansgate, where just at that moment whole windows in two streets were filled with our designs. There was our wallpaper from Sandersons - one of our prize-winning wallpapers - and several curtains from Heals and Edinburgh Weavers. So I went into the store with my sister to order curtains and wallpaper but, to our dismay, we were told they had no stock and that it would take two to three months for them to get a supply from London. This story is typical of an industry which largely regarded the designer as being hopelessly romantic, idealistic and out of touch with the real economic problem. This is what I mean by the shop window attitude to the Palladio Architectural range which was used as a means of selling the "bread and butter" designs. People were attracted into the shop but, when there, they were only confronted with the kind of product that the salesman thought they needed.

There are similar stories in Sweden where designs were bought by the head designer in the factory and offered to the salesmen who would say that they couldn't sell them or who would refuse even to try to sell them and, in one particular case, the designer herself went out and offered them for sale with a very positive result. These, and many other stories, illustrate and confirm the sad fact that the economic man is the manipulator of public taste. The designer in question did not stay in the industry. She had a very varied freelance career in different spheres and has ended up by being head of the Konstfack Skolan in Stockholm, which is the Swedish industrial design and handicraft school. Her name is Inez Svensson. This is a typical example. It happens over and over again where the industry loses valuable people to salesmanship, distribution and education. One can ask what is the point of being educated to produce a product which society does not want, so that even in the design sphere we are back to that ridiculous situation of teachers teaching teachers to be teachers.

During all the years of designing textiles and wallpapers for industry, we developed a lot of very good and interesting relationships but they were very short-lived because of the type of activity we were involved in. The directors and buyers within the various firms were always looking to the next designer. In fact when we stopped that kind of activity, that is to say going out with a collection of designs twice a year, we were quite astonished to find that we were not missed. But we continued to work, taking on one-off commissions where we might do a few thousand metres of textile. We worked with our own hands on a Boozer machine in a textile factory (called Ljungberg's Textile Fabric) which was owned and run by Erik Ljungberg, who had previously been Lisa's teacher when she was at the Design School. We had a very close relationship and I admired all his technical expertise. He could do things that I couldn't do in print, but at the same time he admired me because I did things that he couldn't do. So we had quite a unique collaboration for many years until his death.

We also used a factory in London called Ivo Prints. This was a one family business owned and run by a Czechoslovakian family but, before this family took over and developed the business, it had been run by a man called Ivan Tonder. Tonder had developed a reputation for

very exclusive short runs of printed textiles and he was always open and willing to experiment. He had relatives who were involved in a firm called Hull Traders which moved from London up to Colne in Lancashire. On his retirement to the south of France he had sold the business to his relatives, the Haas family, Victor and Ellen. Victor is now dead. He ran the office and Ellen ran the design studio. Their son, Michael, organized the workshop area and, since his father's death, he is now in charge. It was the most extraordinary family relationship which also extended to their employees. Among their employees were Indians, Jews and Arabs, as well as the Irish and the English - and they all worked in perfect harmony.

There were times during the early and middle 60's when we were asked to do one-off hand printed special designs. We were urged to expand into mass production while still retaining the hand production in our studio. I rejected this idea because it would have entailed employing several assistants and this would have meant that, in the end, I would have become a director instead of being a creator or innovator.

In 1969, we made a kind of compromise. We found out that by using prints which had been made on glass fibre or on a special chemically impregnated paper, we could have the designs laminated into trays. The idea was to produce 40,000 a year which would have given us a living. Each tray was to be different, both in colour and composition, even though it had the same motif. It was a constant variation on a theme; the mark of quality was differentiation. But the salesmen misunderstood this and their mark of quality was sameness - everything should be identical, as in mass production. This was contrary to our idea which was to use mass production and make it appear as though it was a hand produced product, which in fact it was. Our idea was to bring back the use of the hands in the machine mass production so that each product was distinguished by differences and so that both the creator and the consumer escaped the boredom of sameness. At that time, ordinary one-coloured trays of very simple designs were selling at around ten shillings each, whereas our tray had to sell at between £5 and £10 each. Because of the stupidity of the salesmen, we never achieved a mass selling but we could sell one by one from our studio or from one or two specialized shops and what we found was that people bought them. But they did not really use them as trays. Instead they hung them on the wall as works of art so that finally we found that we could sell the printed glass fibre or printed paper more expensively than the finished tray product.

Commissions through architects for projects for public buildings started in the early sixties. These one-off projects started through a commission from the architects Rolf and Margareta Aberg. In the late 50's there were no jobs for architects and both Rolf and Margareta worked as consultants to a wallpaper factory. They came to our studio to buy designs and, because these were so successful, the architects commissioned us to design a special wallpaper for the Lorensbergs restaurant which was part of the Park Avenue Hotel in Gothenburg. This was a printed wallpaper which we printed ourselves by borrowing a factory, namely Ljungbergs printing factory. Then later we were commissioned by the Aberg's to make a Balderkin (a textile which is suspended horizontally) for the same hotel, this being the first hand-printed textile executed in our studio.

This led to a special hand-printed wallpaper for the Swedish American Line ship M/S Gripsholm and this was the first time we used lines in rhythm which indicated the flight of birds. The following year, 1964, again with the Aberg's, we were asked to work with the last of the great transatlantic ships of the Swedish American Line. The ship was called M/S Kungsholm. Our task was to decorate the restaurant on the ship and, at that time, this was the largest restaurant in Europe either on land or afloat. It entailed 16 decorations made with

Perstorp Laminate which is the Swedish equivalent of Formica. This was the first time we experimented with this medium. We also made 16 decorations on velvet with the motif of birds in flight. Over the years since then the Kungsholm has been reorganized and the interiors renovated many times. Finally it was owned by the P&O Line and, up to last year, we heard that our decorations in the big restaurant were intact. As an example of how we would respond to the brief on projects like this, here is a description of the Kungsholm job:

'M/S Kungsholm 1964 - 65'

Our brief for the decoration for the 1st and 2nd class dining rooms of M/S Kungsholm was to create a milieu which stemmed from the period of 1700 in Swedish shipping, namely the East India period. The mood was set by a group of Chinese porcelain which is now housed in glass cases in the centre of the room. This porcelain is traditional to the Swedish American Line and has been used in earlier ships. Our problem was to create this oriental feeling without actually copying a set of Chinese panels.

In addition our brief required that we create a set of forms which not only continued this mood but suggested a contact with the Swedish nature. At the same time, in practical terms, the form had to be designed to give a feeling of the extension of space and light in a large low room virtually devoid of natural light. In other words, we did not set out to hang the decorations like so many postage stamps on to the architecture of the ship, but strove to work organically so that every form and movement was so completely integrated with the architecture that they were in fact an extension of it, which means that the decorations are part of the structure of the boat and not merely an embellishment.

Every mark on the velvet and laminated panels (32 in all) has been calculated to enhance the feeling of space which in itself gives a feeling of contentment and well-being to the passengers. This is the main reason why each panel is composed in a different way with different colours and varied motifs, so that they constitute a counterpoint of forms in related rhythms unified into the whole. Such an idea gives interest from different parts of the room and the interest varies at different distances from the motifs ... from the over-all rhythm to local detail and surface texture.

The birds, on the panels between the port-holes, are silk-screen printed by hand on velvet and they are intended as foils instead of curtains which are superfluous as they cannot function in space within the restricted area of a ships interior. Velvet was chosen as the material because of the rich possibilities of the print quality. It was possible to over-lay colours and screen-print in depth on the pile ... so that the changing light at different angles over the surface gives a constant change of tone from light to dark. The birds are composed in such a way that the observer is engaged in a whole gamut of feeling which ranges from the abstract to the naturalistic. The birds twist and turn, dive and hover, in the way they do when following ships (in this case the models were the seagulls massing over the fish harbour in Marstrand). The shapes of the birds are formed and composed so that the spectator has the feeling that he is sometimes looking at a specific bird in flight, that can be identified and named, and sometimes these shapes become more abstract and dissolve into mist or cloud formations or the waves of the sea. The colours range from sunrise to sunset, from clear weather to storm, or the metallic look of the sea on a dull calm day. A conditioning factor was that the colour had obviously to be dictated by the necessity of harmonizing and contrasting with the surrounding wood panelling, chairs, pillars, carpet etc. While we were working, during the many months of preparation, of drawings and technicalities, we were always acutely conscious of the nuances of colour between the sky

and the rocks of Bohuslan, the province on the west coast of Sweden. Our studio is situated on the rocky island of Marstrand, on this coast-line which is unique in the world and dear to the hearts of most Swedes. The backgrounds to the birds are therefore almost identical to the colour of these local rocks.

The laminated panels, dividing the dining room in the form of a series of screens which are both durable and washable, are again silk-screen printed by hand at Marstrand and laminated by Perstorp AB. Special techniques of hand printing, which have been developed by Cliff Holden and Lisa Gronwall during the last ten years, have been used in close collaboration with the technical methods of Perstorp AB. These printing techniques, used by Marstrand Designers, are similar in intention to American Action and Tachist painting ... the emphasis is always on the physical and the tache or mark that is made is always in relation to the materials used. In common with much of modern painting, from Van Gogh to Sam Francis, we had, for many years, been consciously working with that physical relation between the motif and the evocative mark which is characteristic of much of Chinese calligraphy. It was mainly for this reason that the architects S.I.R., Margareta and Rolf Aberg, commissioned us to execute the decorations. As our methods were already established it was not therefore necessary to copy Chinese motifs or to imitate Chinese hand-writing. The motifs we have used, although they have a Chinese flavour, are nevertheless, taken directly from the nature ... the ripples and shadows of water that we see every day from our studio, the shattered stunted vegetation, reeds and windblown trees that are typical of this island of Marstrand.

The laminated wall-paper on the stairs, appropriately called 'Calligraphy' was designed as a wall-paper by Marstrand Designers, produced in England by Sandersons, and was one of the Sandersons Centenary Competition prize winners which subsequently became a best seller in England, second only to designs by William Morris.

I would like to stress, at this point, that this kind of work raised all kinds of problems, not only of copyright and royalty and the originator's rights, but also in matters of taste, of style and of good design. Our work raised the problem of what is good design and what is bad design and whether good design is good business. This, of course, was a popular idea which is patently not true. It used to be said within the industry that to receive a Design Centre Award was equivalent to the commercial kiss of death. This was not strictly true either because there were some good Design Award winners that were commercially successful. I have considered suspect these notions of good and bad, both in art and in design. It is much more a question of morality and a question of function. Does it function or not?

If we consider the UNESCO building in Paris, even Jean Arp was astonished and disappointed that the architects could not spare the time to discuss with the painters and sculptors how their work was to be conceived as part of the general plan. Although the patron was a corporate body and had commissioned a group of artists (that included Miro, Moore, Picasso and Tomao) to decorate the building for a well defined purpose, nevertheless, the method they used was to leave the artist to himself so he might follow his own individual will. As Edgar Wind in his book *Art and Anarchy* (Faber and Faber, 1963, p.95) pointed out the result was that in this building, which was devoted to the cultural work of the United Nations, the arts "loiter about the place without function, distracted and disunited."

In our architectural projects we have often observed that architects tend to prefer walls that remain as dull as their houses. They seem to regard surface design as no more than a kind of

graffiti which is a blemish on their space. However, houses are not only for keeping the rain out and the warm in. A house has other functions and walls and surfaces should be used to give people a happier feeling, a feeling of contentment. A house should give a feeling of fullness, space, and well being. It is false to assume, as many architects do, that gray and gray or inconspicuous dots and lines or badly drawn pretty roses enlarge the space in a room. It is a fact that they diminish the space and, in diminishing the space, people become nervous; they feel distressed, and, of course, finally, it can only be a bore.

Mostly a matter of taste has to do with security; people hate to move away from the environment where they feel secure. A change of taste or style often comes about through boredom. So, not only do we need design and designers to relieve boredom (the design being created as an escape from boredom) but also the design must be functional in the sense that, in the case of flat surface design, it creates a space relationship with architecture which contributes to the well being and contentment of the people placed in that environment. Such activity is not strictly commercial because the people concerned, that is to say the public, are often quite unaware of the source of that contentment.

One can say that good design in the aesthetic sense is not always related to good design in the functional sense. It is very difficult to demonstrate the success of functional design. Design which does not function diminishes the architectural space which results in people becoming nervous or irritable. This, of course, is something which is difficult to talk about and even more difficult to demonstrate so that, in order to preserve his moral integrity with his client, a designer has to often fool both the client and public in order to operate in an efficient and therefore functional way (that is, with the maximum efficiency).

Question 3.8: Are there special problems for murals in ships' interiors? The biggest problem with ships is the time factor. It is not possible to come on board at an early date to set up the project because there are so many other activities going on at the same time. On a stairway, for example, it is all clogged up with pipes and cables, there are people running up and down carrying material and the air is full of dust. Even if it was physically possible to set it up there is always the danger of it being destroyed before the boat is complete. So there is a very short time to do this kind of work and yet, at the same time, the job must be completed on schedule because the boat is due to sail away. For these reasons it is a completely different situation to working, say, in a hotel or a factory or a bank.

Of course, there are quite a lot of technical problems to do with the planning, especially on the stair walls, where we work on a very large scale, six or seven metres wide and some seventeen metres high running through all the decks. In these situations the mural is viewed on different levels and it must be interesting at a close distance as well as from a very long distance and it must compete with stair rails, which very often interfere with the direct viewing. Then also on many ships we have designed special curtains for the cabins. Here the curtains cover the portholes and the biggest problem is working on such a very short height. Working with normal length curtains in public rooms is a much easier matter.

Question 3.7: How did the commissions for work on ships begin? I think we have dealt with this previously, but briefly, it arose out of working with the architects Margareta and Rolf Aberg. It was through our relationship with the Abergs that we came to work on the M/S Kungsholm. The Swedish American Line was owned by the Brostrom family who were based in Gothenburg and, as a result of this job, we became personal friends and we did many other jobs for them including decorations for their offices. When we were doing the decorations for the M/S Kungsholm we became friends with the overall interior architect, Robert Tillberg, and

we have worked with him on other ships ever since. We have been friends of the Tillberg family now for over 30 years. Claes Feder is another friend who we met when we were doing the Kungsholm job. He was the designer of the ship and, later, he gave us a job making laminated panels for the interior of the Swedish Lloyd hovercraft, built on the Isle of Wight and operating from Ramsgate.

In the early 1970's we met the architects from the Royal Building Committee in Stockholm, Kunglia Byggnad-Styrelsen. The coordinating architect of this organization was Goran Faust and we were introduced to him by his assistant, Bjorn Hulten, who was a freelance architect based in Gothenburg. Some years earlier Bjorn Hulten had seen our contribution to a design exhibition at Liljevalchs in Stockholm. He told us to go and present ourselves to Goran Faust, who then commissioned us to make a screen for the Swedish Embassy in London. It was a difficult task which involved placing a modern design in an Adams interior. After this Goran Faust gave us one or two jobs per year with Swedish embassies and consulates around the world and this work continued for over 15 years.

We no longer have those jobs because some five or six years ago, power was taken away from the architects themselves, who were no longer allowed to give out jobs to the artists of their choice. Instead the choice had to be made by a committee of artists. The result was that they gave the jobs to their friends in the capital city, Stockholm. It was the artists' own organization, K.R.O. (The National Union of Artists), which forced through this issue. It was a democracy by committee, which was a totally false attitude to democracy. This also opened the way for corruption, leaving no room for a value judgment and no room for the needs of the artist who could do the job in the right way, at the right time and at the right price.

We have worked with many architects in many countries; not only in Sweden but also in Norway, Denmark and Germany. A few of them have become very special friends. A very fine collaboration was with the Myrsten family, owners of the Viking shipping line whose home base is at Slite on the island of Gotland. This is a long established shipping family and the son is now taking over from the family. We worked with one of their ships and, subsequently, with other ships at what I would think is the most modern shipyard in Europe, at Papenberg in Germany, run by the Meyer family. Again this was an old established family business with the old father still turning up at the yard at 7 o'clock every morning when he was well over 90.

I would like to add another name to the list of good working relationships - Hans Ahlinder. I had made one or two decorative pieces in the house of very good friends, both doctors, called Marcus and Marcia Skogh. Barbara and Hans Ahlinder lived next door. They admired the pieces we had made for the Skoghs and asked us to make a special piece for their home. This I did and it was a great success. At that time Hans was chief of the missile section at the Saab factory in Linköping. He then invited me to meet his architects because they were just completing the new offices and we were delighted to be able to work on three walls in the reception area of the office building.

There are numerous other friends acting in a professional capacity and even private friends who have helped and sustained us over the years, but it was Renquist and the Abergss and the Tillbergs who at each point changed the course of my life. Of course that is not the whole story and there is the other side of the coin; those people with their negative attitudes and aggressions and lies, who succeeded in pushing me in a particular direction which was not my chosen path.

Official financial help has been sparse. I have only ever had one stipendium or grant in all the years that I have been here and that was a very small one indeed - 18,000 Swedish Crowns -

whereas most Swedish painters get one or two grants per year of a much greater order, 50,000 or 100,000 Crowns for example. The question is, do I lack the right kind of friends or is it because I am a foreigner? Or is it because my art is not quite in tune with the norms of the day? Or is it because I have refused to fit in with the collective decision making which is typical in Sweden and which I consider to be a perversion of democracy?

On a personal level, rather than on a professional level, I had a lot of support and backing from various leading families in Sweden. This did not take the form of buying my art, which they did not understand. Instead they gave me cash loans and, during the difficult years, they gave me financial backing for the enormous bank loans which I was forced to take in order to survive and continue my activity. This support culminated in the formation of the 'Cliff Holden Foundation', a charitable organization which served to protect the interests of both myself and Marstrand Designers and all the activities connected with that name. These benefactors included Eric Von Sydof, who was special ambassador to the European Community, his brother, Christian Von Sydof, the Brostrom family and the Wallenberg family, even though that family is distinguished by being totally uninterested in any form of culture. I should also mention Lars Hjerne, owner and editor of the most influential west coast newspaper Goteborgs Tidningen and his brother-in-law, Per Gyllenhammer, the chief of Volvo. And, of course, there were numerous people who gave us tremendous moral support and who passionately believed in our art and especially in our decoration, but who had no power to help either economically or with the prestige representation.

There are many other relationships which have been both very positive and very negative. For example, for many years we worked with laminates at the Swedish Perstorp factory where, after some fifteen years of close working relationship, I was never given any proper credit and my name was used sometimes without permission and in the wrong situations. I had experimented for several years and finally I was able to make prints (and also to paint) with acrylics so that it was possible then to laminate them. But our collaboration with Perstorp ended over fifteen years ago and we have not worked together since. This was partly because they would not acknowledge my contribution to the development of these new techniques and partly because we were not benefitting enough financially from the arrangement. This was because the process of lamination was not always reliable and when one panel in a mural had not been laminated successfully then we had to remake all the adjoining panels so that the colour would match along the joins. As a result our costs were greatly increased and each time we had to pay Perstorp for the lamination process whether it was successful or not. Finally I gave them an ultimatum that we would only continue to work with them if they would press the panels without charging us for it. As we had given them so much free publicity this would have amounted to a small percentage of what they were already paying out for their advertising.

I am quite sure that it was my experience in printing with acrylics which prompted Tom Rowney's paint company to experiment along similar lines and to produce their more fluid flow acrylics which they used as the basis for a printing set.

This came about as a result of my contact with Tom Rowney after I had asked whether they could develop an acrylic retarder which would extend the time for using the screens before they became blocked. Their response was that they could not produce such a retarder and the only solution was to keep the air humid. They invited me to the factory in Bracknell and, on my arrival, I was taken to the laboratory where a young boy was printing on a small screen. After fifteen minutes the screen blocked and I asked Tom Rowney what they did in such a situation. He said that they had to throw away the screen. My reply was that I could print for two or three hours before blocking and that, when the screen was blocked, I had found a way of cleaning and

unblocking it by soaking and scrubbing with thinners. Tom Rowney and his laboratory technician both said that this was impossible. Nothing, they said, could remove acrylics once they had dried and I told them that I had been doing this every day for the last five years. However they still insisted that this was impossible.

When I had first spoken to Tom Rowney he had suggested that his company might use me in their advertising brochures and he was intending to visit my studio in Sweden where I could demonstrate the process. But he never did visit me and his company used Peter Blake instead of me for their advertising. To this day I have still never received any acknowledgment or credit for my technical innovations from Rowney or from Perstorp.

We now come to Question 3.6: Can I give an account of the well known Volvo mural? The fact is that it is not so well known, but it has a place in our hearts for the way it came about. It was the first and one of those very rare occasions where a client comes into the studio and orders directly. There was a tap on the window and a man waved to us, we opened the door and he entered, then he raised his hat, we shook hands and he said, "My name is Engellau." It was Gunnar Engellau, the chief of Volvo. "Perhaps you would like to do a job for me," he said. "Here is my card and here is the name of my architect in the firm of Lund & Valentine. Call them on Monday and set up a meeting."

This was the beginning of quite a long collaboration for, having first made a wall in the personnel entrance, we also went on to make 20 laminated decorative panels for all the areas where the 1300 employees would sit to pause and drink coffee in what was the biggest open plan office in Sweden at that time. Later we made decorative walls around the coffee areas in the very secret technical centre. Then there was the conference room which was devoid of all decoration; we were asked to liven it up but we thought each area was beautiful in itself. The one space which we thought could afford decoration was a dividing moving wall and so one hot summer we spent a month printing directly onto this wall, making a composition of hanging willow leaves. Also, at that time, we made a series of one colour panels which had to be a special blue - a kind of variation on ultra-marine. This blue was so successful it became known as the 'Volvo Blue' and it was stolen from us by the laminate factory Perstorp. They continued to manufacture and sell it without giving us any credit or any remuneration.

This only illustrates the difficulty of working outside the establishment and outside existing power groups. The power groups have the resources for promotion, for advertising, for representation and for presentation and, as an isolated individual freelancer, you are completely powerless to influence any decisions. Because of this we devised a contract to control the use of our product so that the factory or client did not buy our design or our decoration outright. As I have already explained this contract allowed our clients to buy the 'right of use' of our product and the terms of the contract stipulated that, before they used our product in another situation or moved it into another environment or broke it up altogether, they had to have our permission. In fact, when the design or decoration was no longer useful and no longer fulfilled the purpose for which it was made, it was intended that it would then be returned to the artist. However our experience was that these contracts were never really adhered to and it would have been very difficult to enforce them without incurring legal costs which were beyond our means.

We now come to Question 3.10: Are there some sorts of commissions which you would like to undertake, perhaps for an airport or a London underground station? Yes, there are many commissions that I would love to do. For example, I would like to do a church. I once collaborated with Per Lindekrantz and we made drawings and prototypes of some glass windows for a church, but we failed to get the commission.

The interesting thing about this question is that it mentions an airport and an underground station. The only time I have asked for a job and made some kind of representation in order to get a job, was for some spaces around London Airport and for the underground network in Hong Kong. To this end, I brought the two potential clients to Sweden. They were Jane Freedman, who was then coordinating interior architect for London Airport, and June Fraser, who is a past president of the Chartered Society of Designers and who was engaged on the project for the underground network in Hong Kong. I gave them an intensive tour of some of my projects in Sweden and introduced them to the Perstorp Laminate factory where we were wine and dined. We spent several days with them, but without any result. The airport job went to a company called Tattersfield and something (I cannot quite remember the name), who presented an idea which instead of being a drawing or a mock-up was merely a blow-up from an existing drawing which was an illustration in a book. For this presentation they charged something like £10,000 and the job itself was worth at least a million. It was for the very long walls beside the moving walkway from the new Jubilee Line into the Airport - very long walls - and we had some interesting ideas using a motif of birds. In fact the people who got the job used a bird, which was a single bird in flight like an illustration of a bird's wing movement, and I thought this was a very boring result. The other wall was a series of illustrated silhouettes of various capitals of the world.

I tried to get the Charing Cross underground but that went to David Gentleman who did a series of blown-up illustrations. In my view a similar mistake was made at Baker Street station. Because Baker Street was the address of Sherlock Holmes, the designer was given the brief to make a design from a series of illustrations on the theme of Sherlock Holmes. I think this is a very naive attitude to decorating public places. Illustrations should be kept in books and not blown up onto public walls like so many posters.

I must say that I was very shocked when I first saw the decoration of the Tottenham Court Road underground station. This is a mosaic made by Eduardo Paolozzi which to me is much overdone. It looks like a mass of unorganized jewellery with typically British garish colours, more or less, red, white and blue. I have been told that he didn't actually do the work himself. He had to import Italian experts. It is rather interesting to compare the pathetic effort to decorate London underground stations with many of those in Stockholm and Moscow, although I have only seen the Moscow ones in reproduction.

So yes, of course, this is an unrealized dream of mine - to have a commission where one would be left free (as Matisse was, for example, with the Barnes Foundation project) to choose the subject and the manner and the design of a commission for a special project. I have always painted figures and I would very much like to make a great figure composition. I once took part in a competition for a wall in the town hall of Vasteras in Sweden. I submitted some drawings and prototypes of the wall with masses of figures but my proposal was rejected in favour of another artist who had submitted a more abstract and decorative design.

Cultural Exchange

In my role as a British artist living in Sweden I have organized many exhibitions and I have written many articles and talked on the radio in both England and Sweden in order to promote art and design and to indicate some affinities between the cultural life of the two countries. Between 1952 and 1962, I had magazine articles published in *Studio International*, *The Listener* and *Art News & Review* and, in the Swedish press, my articles were published by *Konstperspektiv*, *Paletten* and *Konstrevy*.

After 9 years of trying, I finally secured exhibitions in London for Evert Lundquist which led to further exhibitions in New York and Chicago and to an international prize at San Paolo. I showed him in the London Group and was instrumental in having him elected to membership. After talking on the radio, writing articles and showing video film and slides to various critics and galleries, Helen Lessore had finally agreed to show him at the Beaux Arts Gallery. She already had a stable apart from the Kitchen Sink School. She had already shown Kossof and Auerbach, but would not show Bomberg, myself, Dorothy Mead or Dennis Creffield.

I had asked Lawrence Alloway (who was then head of the ICA in London) to take Lundquist but he had refused on the grounds that Lundquist seemed too provincial. Then, at the private view of Lundquist's show at the Beaux Arts Gallery, Alloway came up to me and apologized profusely, saying that he considered that Lundquist was a major artist on the international scene. Some fifteen years later when Alloway was curator of the Guggenheim in New York, he invited Lundquist to exhibit there together with another artist, Olle Baertling with whom I had had contact in 1952. At that time I had told the Stockholm critics and art historians that Lundquist and Baertling were the only two in Sweden who I thought could represent Sweden internationally, even though Lundquist was the one I loved and Baertling was the one I hated. Baertling and I had quarrels continuously over a long period.

Finally Alloway invited both of them to America but, in the case of Baertling, this came fifteen years too late because critical opinion in America then thought he was following the American Hard Edge which was similar to the movement in Sweden called 'Concretism.' But this was a twist of history, a falsification, because in fact Baertling was operating parallel with the Hard Edge painters in America. His initial stimulus had come from August Herbin in Paris during the early 1920's.

Previous to this, I had discussions with collectors in Stockholm and with Rothenstein at the Tate which culminated in the presentation of a Lundquist painting to the Tate Gallery. I also had discussions with various collectors in Stockholm and I was promised several paintings. Finally I chose one from an architect called Nils Tesch who had collected Lundquist's paintings for some twenty years.

This picture called 'Woman in Red' was presented to the Tate Gallery and so Lundquist became the first living Scandinavian artist to be represented there. The only other Scandinavian artist represented at that time was Edvard Munch whose work had not been acquired until long after his death. (Many years later, Olle Baertling was also represented.) In a talk on BBC Radio 3 (3rd March 1960) Andrew Forge was full of enthusiasm for Lundquist's painting at the Tate which he called 'Girl at a Window.'

'Evert Lundquist'

The picture by Lundquist which has been hanging in the Tate for the last year or so has attracted a lot of sometimes mystified attention. It is not only the only work by this artist yet seen in England, but it has not been preceded by reproductions or criticism.

Lundquist is 56, that is to say he belongs to the same generation as Giacometti and Victor Pasmore. He has been working consistently since the early thirties but has only recently begun to show outside Sweden - an exhibition of his work has just closed in Paris, and he will be showing in England before the end of the year.

The Tate picture, which is called 'Girl at a Window,' is not easy to read: is the pale, pyramidal form on the left a head or shoulders or a whole figure? And the window, is it the diagonal bar at the bottom of the picture or the pale rectangle at the top left? Impossible to say. But this is *not* to say that the picture is vague - on the contrary, the forms, the modulations of the colour are outstandingly precise and there is a positive relationship between the forms which is as exact, as physically palpable as the relationship between the walls and the floor and the ceiling of the room. They are *there*.

A story is told of Courbet at work on a landscape: a visitor commends him upon the realism of the tree-trunk that he is painting. "Oh, is that what it is?" Courbet is said to have answered.

Through all the pictures by Lundquist that I've seen there runs a marvellous harmonisation: the colour operates on a fairly narrow range: russets, golds, earth-reds, rose, green-grays, close in tone. The paint itself is thick. Forms are simplified, but never, mysteriously enough, generalised. And one never senses distortion. In this respect he reminds me of Turner. Every surface is spatial - nothing is unfelt and the sequences of colour fall with a sense of astonishing exactitude.

He treats his subjects (still-lives, the human figure, an occasional scene of action), he treats his subjects with a powerful even-ness. I can think of no other word. A background shape is locked in with a foreground shape, the tones brought close, the edges groped for with powerful and tender gestures, and the two are stated with equality against the surface of the canvas. The thickness, the unhesitatingly material quality of the statement places them on an equal footing.

About his thickness of paint: in Lundquist's work it's always the consequence of drawing, and there's no romantic separation of material and image such as one finds, for example, in Dubuffet.

There are certain passages in Rembrandt in which, seen from a certain distance, the relationship between imagery, form and paint takes on an extraordinary equilibrium. It is like a release: one is released from the physical and re-introduced to it in the same instant. One is relieved from having to look *into* the picture, yet this conglomeration of paint, though flat, seems to breathe, to be strung tight with its own weight.

It is this sense of a possibility of parity between image, form and material, with all its implications, which seems to me to be the most valuable goal of modern art. Cubism formulated the intention, then dropped it in a maze of half-solutions. Few painters since have been in a position to pick up this particular thread. The reason why Lundquist seems to me of such exceptional importance is that he has placed the reality of his subject-matter and the reality of his picture as an object on the same level. And he has done this without any artificial fracturing of the different levels on which the picture is read ...

I know of no European artist of Lundquist's generation whose work is as rich, both in its achievement and in its openness for the future.

Forge ended his talk by saying: "I know of no European artist of Lundquist's generation whose work is as rich, both in its achievement and in its openness for the future." And so this recognition is tempered by giving it the limitation "Lundquist's generation" which is the usual trick of critics to protect their opinion - they would not say the same of Picasso or Matisse, for instance. In spite of this appraisal of Lundquist and in spite of the part which I had played in bringing his work to their attention, both Andrew Forge and David Sylvester continued to promote Auerbach in preference to myself, the Borough Group and Bomberg. One or two critics in Sweden (and this has happened quite recently) have even gone so far as to suggest that Lundquist's work has an affinity with Auerbach - as if it was Auerbach, working in England at the same time, who was really taking the lead.

When Lundquist's work was exhibited at the Beaux Arts Gallery (November, 1960) Lawrence Alloway reviewed the exhibition in an article called 'Turner and Contemporary Art' (Weekly Post, 5th November, 1960, p.37). This article shows some appreciation for the approach to painting through the sense of touch, which Lundquist, myself and Bomberg have all had in common, but he seems to be alarmed by the disorientation and confusion that this must inevitably involve and he remains sceptical that the problems which our approach has raised could ever be resolved.

The Beaux Arts Gallery, a centre of David Bomberg-type painting, is showing Evert Lundquist, a Swedish painter working on related ground. He has, in common with Bomberg, a distrust of observation, a desire to suspend visual perception in favour of intimations of weight and density. Instead of surfaces, which is what our eye see, these painters grope for blindly-perceived masses. (De Stael touched on this approach but, compared to Bomberg or Lundquist, allowed for visual data as well.) This notion of painting forms experienced subjectively, not by the trained and seeing eye, is reminiscent of the kind of perception Victor Lowenfeld christened "haptic" (from the Greek word for touch). Lundquist's raised paint surfaces, in which bulky images are embedded, record a tactile rather than a visual perception of objects.

His subjects, however, continue to be those of an old-time visual painter (half-length nudes, cliffs, still life objects, workmen) but obscurely presented, clogged by paint. Instead of using paint to create a visual illusion Lundquist uses it like clay and models the picture. By dramatising the tactile properties of objects at the expense of the visual, he weakens his, and our, power to differentiate objects and space. In his paintings everything is set claustrophobically at one distance. Like Bomberg, he rejects a visual approach to form but without finding anything to replace it that is half as comprehensive or sensitive to the world. As a result these canvases are like the work of a newly-blinded man, disorientated and confused, without the spatial information that he will learn in time from compensating senses. The idea of painting non-visually but rejecting abstraction is worth pursuing and Lundquist shows tenacity and power. Possibly the problem is not resolvable in terms of a visual art. At present, anyhow, too many of Lundquist's pictures seem to be a drama of not seeing properly, rather than being another way of perceiving, equal to the way that is being ousted.

When Alloway says that "the idea of painting non-visually but rejecting abstraction is worth pursuing" and, at the same time, he associates this, through the work of Bomberg and Lundquist, with a "distrust of observation" he does more to confuse the issue than to clarify it. Neither Bomberg nor I have ever said that we distrusted observation. What we have tried to indicate is that observation is not enough. We rejected the visual only because 'seeing' is

dictated to and restricted by 'knowledge.' What we have to deal with is feeling through all the senses and not with illusionistic renderings of received knowledge.

Clearly Alloway prefers De Stael because, as he puts it, De Stael "allowed for visual data." By "visual data" he means the knowledge of things seen and without this knowledge he says that one cannot "see properly." My view is that it is precisely because we have this kind of knowledge that we are prevented from giving the world around us our full attention. He is acknowledging that if there was another way of perceiving then this would be worth pursuing but, since he doubts that there is another way, he is suggesting that this pursuit can only lead to disorientation and confusion. He cannot accept that in these paintings there is evidence that we have found another way. Like so many other critics of this period he thinks that the only alternative to visual illusion is in abstraction. This is not so much a belief as an impasse in the development of analytical thought which has been caused by the critical terminology available. Because Alloway does not understand the terms in which we have discussed our approach to painting he is led to question whether there is any sense in it at all. And so even in this case, where we have an intelligent and well informed man who is disposed to be favourable to the work, nevertheless, there is always a note of scepticism. Because he doubts our intentions he can not genuinely appreciate the values of the paintings or the painters who made them. In his terms, there is no alternative but to seek knowledge of spatial information. But spatial information, in terms of an awareness of space, does not come through the eyes, but through movement and the sense of touch, which does not mean just the physical movement of the eye or the head but the movement of the whole body. This is the basis for our comprehension of actual space and in the virtual space of painting this corresponds to an imagined movement projecting into the space. In the same article, Alloway allows this in Turner and in the late Monet but not in Lundquist: "This engulfing space accompanied Turner's increasing reliance on colour and atmosphere at the expense of linear perspective or modelling. Participation in the space of the picture in terms of swimming or flying rather than walking or standing, is related to Monet's lily-ponds."

With these words, "painting non-visually while rejecting abstraction," Alloway betrays his limits. He swings between the representational in art and what must be his definition of abstraction; which, in his terms, can only mean geometric shapes and forms, as in Muslim art or the throwing around of paint - both these disciplines are decorative but have no relation to so-called reality. His failure is his inability to read the meaningful image when divested of the anecdote and the trappings of everyday seeing. He needs and relies on the visual clues embodied in what I term the mechanics of seeing. In one degree or another, all painting is abstract. But the elements in a painting are not units with independent meanings, so that you cannot split up a painting in the way you can split up a sentence with each word in isolation having independent meaning. The picture is a logical sequence of events played out on the canvas.

Another review of the Beaux Arts exhibition was written by Eric Newton for the Manchester Guardian. Having categorized Lundquist as a expressionist, Newton then compares Lundquist's expressionism with other so-called expressionists. He compares it to the "frankness" of Soutine, the "force" of Bomberg and the "recklessness" of de Kooning. All of these are his terms of praise and, together with his use of the word "density," they are terms which I think have no meaning. At the same time he seems to be afraid of what I consider to be one of the virtues in Lundquist's work, namely "the breadth and impetuosity of the brush-stroke" which cause some of the paintings to "hover on the verge of abstraction."

Evert Lundquist, at the Beaux Arts Gallery in Bruton Place, W1, is a Swedish painter who deserves, and may soon attain an international reputation. Swedish art, crisp, colourful, and charming, has never proved exportable. But Lundquist's first one-man show in London, following an exhibition in Paris earlier in the year, proves that he has solidier qualities than one expects from most of his countrymen.

Impetuous and monumental, he applies thick paint with a formidable muscular gesture that lies half way between the frank expressionism of Soutine or the force of Bomberg and the recklessness of de Kooning. But to all his paintings is a veneer behind which lies a delicacy of colour, sometimes muted, sometimes resplendent, always limited to one end or the other of the spectrum.

Like all true expressionists he clings to the particular visual experience that has stimulated him to paint - the nude model, the crowded farmyard, the blacksmith in action, or the bulky oil jar. Barely distinguishable from each other because of the breadth and impetuosity of the brush-stroke, these objects still keep their character and hold his pictures together, giving them a density that no purely abstract painting (and some of them hover on the verge of abstraction) could achieve.

Newton's argument seems to be that, despite verging on abstraction, the objects still keep their character and his pictures hold together because Lundquist "clings to the particular visual experience which stimulated him to paint." He says that this work is expressionist. He fixes it in a category so that it becomes good of its kind - and why is it good? He is saying that it is good because each painting is held together by being recognizable by its subject. In other words he means it is good because it represents something.

There was a group started in the early 30's around Lundquist called the Saltsjö-Duvnas Group. Another member of this group was Staffan Hallström and we exhibited many times together until his premature death in a car accident. In fact, this group was not founded so much on any basic principles or common bond, but was more a geographical grouping, as was a parallel group in Gothenburg called the Gothenburg Colorists, who based their ideas largely on Matisse's theories at the time of the Fauves. The most interesting of these painters was Inga Schiöle who spent some thirty years in a mental hospital and during that time continued to paint better and better. Even when short of materials he drew with crayon on toilet paper. I tried to sell a painting of his to the Tate who were interested, but the prices were far too high and his dealer at the time refused to lower the prices. Schiöle himself was handicapped, not only mentally but also because his dealer had sole control over all he produced.

In March of 1962 I exhibited my paintings and graphic art at the Drian Galleries in London and I invited the Swedish sculptor, Palle Pernevi, to show with me. The reviews of this exhibition are worth quoting because they demonstrate that at least some critics in London had come to recognize the connection between myself and Bomberg and my involvement with the career of Evert Lundquist. However they all seem to be agreed that they find my work "difficult." Dennis Young wrote about the exhibition for Goteborgs Tidning (the Gothenburg evening newspaper). Here is the first half of a copy which I have in English where he discusses my work (in the second half he goes on to discuss Pernevi).

'Holden and Pernevi in London'

The joint exhibition of sculpture by the Swede Palle Pernevi and paintings by the Gothenburg-Englishman Cliff Holden has had a distinctly odd reception here.

Pernevi achieved only the briefest of references in the press yet the Tate Gallery is considering purchasing one of his major works. Holden, even more curiously, has gained reverential comments but has sold best at a big mixed exhibition on the other side of town ('The London Group Exhibition' which is the British 'Salon des Refuses').

Holden, of course, is well known in London galleries as the leader of the celebrated "Bomberg" group (so-called because the painters derive their attitudes from the teachings of David Bomberg, accepted by some critics as the most important painter that Britain has produced this century).

Holden has gained his reputation without ever having had a one-man show in London, however, and the full range of his work has clearly been kept from us by the selection committees of the mixed exhibitions in which he has participated.

The exhibition here under review has thus surprised a number of critics. A previously unsuspected harshness has appeared, a quality of uncompromising, painful struggle with the act of seeing which with some unanimity the critics have labelled "difficult." Holden has become a "difficult" painter. It is true too. He has moved away from the romantic colourful works of ten years ago, with their rich pigment and sonorous Rembrandtesque lighting. Colour and tonal contrasts are harsher and, sometimes, light and paint have evaporated leaving a "clumsy" adumbration of the bare bones of seeing.

Of course, Holden is often linked with Evert Lundquist - whose reputation he has stage-managed here with great earnestness. The coincidence of these two painters, who had unknowingly struggled with similar problems for years before they met, is well known, but it seems to me that Holden is now travelling forward and leaving the province of 'la belle matiere' for Lundquist to cultivate alone.

It is not surprising that few critics can follow him all the way. The rest watch with respect - and some apprehension - as he picks his rough and stoney way to heaven. Pernevis small notice was maybe due to the competition of several other important exhibitions. Someone suggested art politics, but I do not think so ...

I also received some comment from Peter Stone in a column entitled 'All Sorts of Expressionism' (The Jewish Chronicle, 23rd March, 1962) and this follows a discussion of 'Vanguard American Painting' (an exhibition then on at the Usis Gallery) where he suggests an indirect link between the David Park's 'Green Nude' and Bomberg, saying that Bomberg's "expressionism was founded on sound draughtsmanship and a strong sense of form expressed spontaneously."

A direct link with Bomberg is the Drian Galleries' exhibition of Cliff Holden, who came to him scarcely having held a brush, and paid tribute to him as a teacher in a broadcast. Holden has lived in Sweden, and his work is better known there than here. He is a fine painter of mass and space, with assertive broad brush strokes and a disturbing colour sense. Painting the human figure economically he conveys weight and light and movement with only occasional incoherence.

In the arts page of Topic magazine (17th March, 1962, p. 36) my work was once again mentioned in the context of an article which was mainly concerned with discussing the 'Vanguard American Painting' show, this time when it was on display at the American Embassy.

At the Drian Gallery Cliff Holden shows some obstinately difficult pictures, prickly and uncomfortable, as remote from any facile game with contemporary styles as possible. Out of a dogged determination to take a harder road than his talent demands he has pushed himself out on a limb and made it virtually impossible to appraise him. He is puzzling, talented and uncompromising.

At the same time as the Drian exhibition my work was included in an exhibition organised by the London Group. Andrew Forge wrote an article for Art News and Review (March 1962) in which he mentioned my early involvement with this group.

'New Members of the London Group'

The vitality of the London Group has always been a fluctuating thing, dependent upon the needs that its members have had for the Group at a given time. For instance, when during the late 'forties several artists of calibre, notably Victor Pasmore and David Bomberg were looking urgently for an outlet they were able to give the Group's exhibitions an extraordinary purposefulness and energy: those exhibitions still stand out clearly in one's mind. A few years ago it was said that the Group had had its day - but to judge from the new names that have been added to its membership in the last twelve months it looks as if it is now at the height of a new burst of energy. Eleven new members have been elected and they come from all quarters of the stylistic compass ...

Cliff Holden, Dennis Creffield and Leslie Marr all first exhibited with the London Group in the late 'forties when they were working in close association with David Bomberg: they have in fact a direct historical link with the foundation of the Group, for Bomberg was a founder-member.

Holden, who created the Borough Group just after the war, has been in Sweden for much of the last few years. He shows regularly there and enjoys a considerable reputation as a print-maker as well as a painter. His works are in many public collections in Scandinavia. Besides showing at the London Group this month, he also has a one-man show on at the Drian Gallery.

During the 1960's I was instrumental in helping the following artists to exhibit with the London Group; Peter Tillberg, Jimmy McFall, Torsten Bergmark, Olle Carlstrom, Staffan Hallstrom and Evert Lundquist (who was later voted in as an honorary member). Apart from Hallstrom and Lundquist, the show I arranged at the Crane Kalman Gallery in 1963 included myself, Axel Kargel, Inger Schioler and Gustav Sjöo. Here is Dennis Young's review of the show for Göteborgs Tidning:

'Swedish Figurative Art in London'

The exhibition of Swedish figurative painting just ended at the Crane Kalman Gallery in London represents the most important step forward that Swedish art has so far taken in England. It is the first show to be held and it is very pleasing to report that it has been a success for the six painters represented - Evert Lundquist, Cliff Holden, Steffan Hallstrom, Inge Schioler, Axel Kargel and Gustaf Sjöo.

Londoners are already familiar with the work of Lundquist and Holden, both of whom have works in the Tate Gallery, but this show has undoubtedly extended their reputation. Holden of course is an unrelenting worker in the cause of Swedish figurative painting. It was through his efforts that Lundquist was originally shown here and he was responsible last year for introducing us to Palle Pernevi, besides being the inspiration behind the Crane Kalman exhibition.

Writing in the catalogue, Andrew Forge, a distinguished British critic who seems to have adopted both Lundquist and Holden (and who himself paints in a similar style) has provided an essay full of insight in which he discusses all six painters and nominates Lundquist's pictures among "the most mysterious and satisfying of our time."

Other critics have enthused equally. The only note of discord has come from those English collectors who found the paintings too expensive. It is perhaps worth dwelling a moment on this fact. Perhaps this would not appear the case in Sweden but here, where Schioler for instance has never exhibited before, £1000 certainly seems a badly judged price for a small canvas. One of Hallstrom's pictures is, I understand, being considered for the Tate Gallery, but his prices too are high; I hope that this will not be a factor that might motivate his rejection - as was the case with a sculpture by Pernevi last year. One cannot fairly ask painters to betray their Swedish patrons by reducing their prices when they exhibit abroad, but in a country like Sweden where there is a proportionately higher rate of art consumption the consequent high prices are bound to deter foreigners from investing. The success of this exhibition poses a problem.

At the same time as this exhibition has been going it has been especially interesting to find that Lundquist, Holden and Hallstrom are also represented in a much larger exhibition here called the 'London Group'. This is an annual assembly of 'avant garde' art which has taken place regularly since the First World War and which until recently has, more than any other show, represented the radical element in British art as a sort of 'salons des refuses.' Holden exhibits as a member of the group, Hallstrom as a non-member, and Lundquist, uniquely as the first foreigner to be invited to honorary membership. He has responded with three magnificent canvases.

This is not without a certain significance. The London Group during these years has lost a good deal of its old status. The former body of extreme reaction, the Royal Academy, which ten years ago was antagonistic even to Picasso now holds an open door to modernists of many kinds; whilst on the other hand the 'Young Contemporaries Exhibition' has become the focus for extreme experimental works. Add to this the fact that 'avant garde' art sells as never before in the smart galleries of Bond Street and you have explained away the need for a 'salon des refuses.' The London Group therefore has been slowly dying of anaemia. Indeed the way in which some of its most distinguished members send third rate works or even none at all is indicative of nothing if not a death wish.

In such circumstances the invitation to Lundquist might seem a doubtful compliment until one remembers that there are some members who do still take the London Group seriously

- and that these nine or ten use paint in some way like Lundquist uses it. They are represented in the exhibition by some 24 of the best pictures there.

They clearly understand the stature of Lundquist, and indeed of Hallstrom. Their influence in the London Group becomes increasingly clear and some of them are obviously determined to make it again a place where artists can be independent of the supertax dealers of Bond Street or the deadly homogeneity of the Royal Academy. In lending them his prestige Lundquist makes a noble gesture to a country which has long neglected him. One can only hope that it will bear fruit.

By arrangement with Robert Erskine from St. George's Gallery in London, I brought several British graphic exhibitions to Gothenburg and Stockholm. One of these was at Lorensbergs Konstsalong, Gothenburg in 1958 (3rd -17th January) and this exhibition, entitled 'British Graphic Art,' included prints by Gillian Ayres, Michael Ayrton, John Coplans, Patrick Heron, Henry Moore, John Piper, Graham Sutherland and 36 other artists, as well as two of my own prints. I sold prints by Anthony Gross, Graham Sutherland and William Scott to both the King and the National Museum.

By introducing him to many artists, including Moore, Chadwick, Armitage and Butler, I helped the architect Bo Boustedt to collect one of the largest and most comprehensive private collections of contemporary sculpture in Europe. He would often make purchases by exchanging photographic equipment (Hasselblad cameras) or his services as a photographer of sculpture. He was responsible for making photographs of Moore's sculpture which were then exhibited in New York. We had several meetings with Henry Moore and also with the director of the Museum in Gothenburg. These meetings led to the town acquiring one of the Moore's late three-piece reclining figures for half price. It is placed in Slottskogen which was not Moore's choice. Moore had chosen a place on top of a hill, a little way out of the town, and this would have been a marvelous place for his work. But, after Moore had left, the town authorities decided to place it on flat ground in the middle of the town, because they thought that more people would see it there. However, where the sculpture is now, it is obscured by the trees around it and it is very difficult to find.

I helped Jorgen Fogelquist with his show in London and, at the same time, I toured the Swedish critic, Kristian Romare, around England and introduced him to Armitage, Chadwick, Butler and Henry Moore. I also toured Andrew Forge around Sweden, introducing him to critics, historians, painters and sculptors. We visited many artists' studios and I arranged lecture engagements, in Stockholm, at the Academy and, in Gothenburg, at the Valands Konstskola and at the Museum.

I spent over two years helping to arrange the Strindberg exhibition at the British Museum which ended in a fiasco. I had intended to cultivate the press long in advance of the opening but, despite all my efforts, the organizers from the Modern Museum and the Swedish Institute in Stockholm failed to let me know what the date of the opening was until it was too late. Hardly anybody knew about the exhibition and there was no response from the critics except for two lines in the Art News and Review magazine. By comparison, I organized a number of shows myself in Gothenburg which were a great success. These shows introduced the British sculptors, Butler, Chadwick and Armitage, to the Swedish public and this led to the Museum in Gothenburg acquiring a small sculpture by Chadwick.

No official in either country thanked me for these activities. In fact the bureaucrats were somewhat upset that a private person should presume to dabble in their sphere. Sweden is a country of bureaucrats, committee men and collective decision making. The individual is something of a disease. As Roland Huntford pointed out in his book *The New Totalitarians*: "The price of contentment in Sweden is absolute conformity. Personal desires must be tailored to the desires of the group. Mostly this is forthcoming. Where it is not, society imposes uniformity. Methods are civilized, rational and humane, but still remorseless. Difference in the Swedish world has always been something undesirable, half sin, half disease."

In a talk I gave on the BBC Home Service, which was entitled 'An Artist in Sweden' (transmitted at 9.30 - 9.45 am on Thursday, 12th August, 1954), I explained how the Art Club system in Sweden had helped to encourage a widespread interest in art and how this gave artists many more opportunities to sell their work. Some parts of this talk were printed in *The Listener* magazine (19th August, 1954).

'Swedish Enthusiasm for Painting'

'Swedes certainly like paintings,' said Cliff Holden in a Home Service talk. 'They look at them, they visit picture galleries as the public here goes to the cinema. And appreciation is not confined to the enlightened few, to the odd intellectual who wanders into a Bond Street gallery, but to all types of people who crowd into the galleries so as to make viewing almost uncomfortable. The galleries, too, are not confined to the capital city. Even some small villages boast a gallery and an art club, and some painters claim to sell more in the smaller places.'

'But the business of hanging pictures in galleries for people to look at and buy was only a very small part of Swedish art life. There are the clubs. The largest one has a membership of 200,000 and the Stockholms Sparvagars, the equivalent of our London Transport, has 4,000 members. And these clubs exist not to arrange holiday excursions, or to encourage the enjoyment and practice of amateur painting, but to help the workers to purchase their own paintings for their own private enjoyment.'

'What has brought about this great interest in the arts? I think part of the answer lies in the forty years of propaganda by a government that believes that the material welfare of its citizens is not enough, that a healthy state requires a flourishing art life. The King, too, sets a fine example by being one of the biggest patrons of the arts; he not only buys large numbers of paintings, but gives stipends to students to enable them to study and travel abroad.'

'In most Swedish houses or flats there are paintings, and in many the walls are completely covered. One of the largest hospitals in Stockholm has all the corridors, stairways, and many of the rooms filled with sculpture, murals, and paintings. They are not always good paintings, but at least they are made of paint and satisfy that famous aphorism by Maurice Denis which so well sums up the aspirations of all art movements from his day to ours: "Remember that a painting - before being a war horse, a naked woman, some anecdote, or what not - is essentially a flat surface covered with colours arranged in a certain order.'"

A lot of interest was aroused in England by an article which I wrote entitled 'Swedish Art Economy' (printed in *Art News and Review*, Saturday, 31st August, 1957, p.1, p.4). This

resulted, during 1961, in long discussions and correspondence with Lawrence Alloway and Dr. Roland Penrose at the Institute of Contemporary Art and with Ronald Pickvance from the Arts Council, who wanted to know how such a system could be started in Britain. They thought that an initiative of this sort could only be started with capital. They failed to grasp how the Art Clubs had come about in Sweden, which was probably due to there being a greater interest in art amongst the Swedish population (and also, perhaps, a natural aptitude for collective organization).

For the record I think I ought to say that the difference between the art life in England and Sweden is quite considerable in relation to one's contact with other artists. In England it is a very tough scene - the artists are very secretive, both in their practice and in the way they operate in the commercial international art market, but the organizations are very open to outside influence. In fact, one can almost say they are dominated by foreigners. In Sweden it is just the opposite. The artists are very friendly and open but the institutions will not welcome anyone who is not a Swedish artist. For example, the Gothenburg Art Club had to change the rules in order to admit me as a foreigner and the national organization called the K.R.O. (which is really a kind of national trade union of artists) did not admit foreigners until about fifteen years ago when they changed the rules. The result is, although I have many friends, I have never really been accepted as part of the art or cultural life in Sweden. I am always a foreigner. Among my professional friends I remain the outsider. They are my friends but not my allies. Swedes like Swedish culture, even if they have to dip into the Parisian scene for a little outside stimulus.

One of the endearing characteristics of the Swedish people is that they are very loyal friends. They are very difficult to know at first and it is very difficult to break down the formal barriers but, once that is achieved, they are friends for life.

My first and oldest friend was, of course, the person that brought me here in the first place, who I met in London during the exhibition at the Parsons Gallery when I was working in Bertram Mills Circus. He was the painter Torsten Renquist. We had very little in common. I never agreed with his ideas in painting which were somewhat eclectic, but, around 1964, he stopped painting and devoted himself to wood sculpture which I found not only more interesting but unique and authentic. This work related more to his personality.

Among the friends I have made in Sweden, I should mention Torsten Bergmark, who was at one time the editor of the art magazine *Paletten* and, later, art critic of *Dagens Nyheter*, the main Stockholm newspaper. Later still he was professor of art history at the Academy. We are about the same age and have a similar background, that is to say we both came from a farming community and Quakerism. He is also a painter but both his painting and his thought and his writings are imbued with that kind of Marxist social realism which can be associated with John Berger, who is in fact one of his friends. Torsten Bergmark once said: "We need you Cliff, you are a catalyst in the Swedish art life." But although I have given so much of my time to promoting Swedish artists in England and while I have had quite a considerable influence, especially in design, nevertheless none of this has ever been acknowledged officially by the art historians.

Then, of course, there was my friendship with Evert Lundquist and his wife, Ebba Reuterström, and it was through them that I was introduced to Staffan Hallström. But, for reasons which I have never been able to fathom, Lundquist would not acknowledge me in print or in conversation as a painter colleague. I am listed and acknowledged in his biography as a

critic - at the same time, however, he maintained a very close intimate relationship, sending me innumerable postcards and thanking me for everything that I had done for him over the years. I was always the dear friend, not the dear colleague. It was as though my critical writings were of more importance to him than my actual painting. We did exhibit together several times, but in mixed shows together with several other artists, whereas Staffan Hallstrom and I shared shows together several times.

Folke Edwards is another good friend, despite the fact that we meet rarely and we have never, in over 25 years, agreed about anything. He gained his reputation by organising exhibitions around narcotics and pornography which, in the early years, prevented him from gaining other jobs for which he was well qualified. He became editor of *Paletten* for some years, then he was art critic for the newspaper *Stockholms Tidningen* and, finally, he became director of the new culture centre in the Culture House in Stockholm. Now he has achieved the ambition he had some 25 years ago and he is the director of the Museum in Gothenburg.

My oldest friends in Gothenburg are Bengt Abrahamsson and Bernt Eklundh. For many years they worked together on the Gothenburg evening paper *GT*. I called them "the heavenly twins" because they worked so closely together, Eklundh being the boss at that time, but they were very different in outlook and character. Abrahamsson was an atheist, somewhat sceptical but absolutely honest. Every fact had to be double checked. Eklundh was not only a Christian but a preacher full of enthusiasm and given to lying. That is to say that he rather confused facts with fiction. His interviewing technique was rather unusual. He asked the question and even supplied the answer. However the result was that very often the true facts were more interesting than his fabrications.

Now I would like to consider Question 4.4 which is concerned with my representation in major galleries and museums. I do not need to list the number of galleries and we can avoid spelling out the names. We can refer to various catalogues for a complete list. I have three paintings in the Modern Museum in Stockholm, one in the Tate Gallery and one in the Rutherford Collection in Manchester. My graphic work is represented in the National Museum in Stockholm and in the Modern Museum in Edinburgh. Apart from that, Lisa and I have examples of our work in the Whitworth Museum in Manchester and, in the archives of the Victoria & Albert Museum, we have original drawings and prototype proof prints of textile. But the representation in museums cuts no ice if it is not in conjunction with a popular public image which comes about through the combined activities of the major museums in the world - the kind of activity which can only be termed a circus, an entertainment. One has the feeling, especially in England, that, while being sustained economically by having part-time teaching jobs (which is a kind of pension from the State to sustain their activity), artists then go on to make works, happenings, circuses or whatever, which are designed specifically for museum display. I have never participated in this kind of activity either on the teaching level or in my product.

In England I never achieved any dealer or any recognition from any official body. Some people say this is because I have been outside England for so long and that people have forgotten about me. But this is not strictly true because people like Hockney, Pasmore and Sutherland could live for thirty years outside England without being affected in this way and Kitaj thrives on a dual nationality. I think it has much more to do with my personality. I have never been a social type and I have tried to make my art with integrity. Whether it was in the sphere of design or large scale murals or in my private work as a painter, there have always been some principles which I would not compromise. In each of these activities I have tried to keep the functions separate, whereas today the popular idea is to lump them together, so that

there is a confusion both in the minds of the artist and the public and it all comes out in terms of entertainment.

Something around ninety per cent of art produced in Britain is sold to foreigners. Therefore the British scene is dominated by the needs of an international market. The opposite is the case in Sweden. It is practically impossible to earn a living by teaching because there are so very few art schools (only three or four) and the galleries are oriented towards a Swedish market. Swedes buy Swedish. There is a very different attitude in London, where the so-called 'School of London' is dominated by foreigners.

When I first came to Sweden, I was regarded as something of a curiosity. There were very few foreigners in Sweden at that time and later, as was stated by Torsten Bergmark, I was regarded as something of a catalyst necessary to Sweden in that capacity. But, although I have lived in Sweden now for over 40 years, I am still regarded as a foreigner which is clear from looking at the catalogue of the Modern Museum in Stockholm. It is a very thick catalogue and three-quarters of the pages are devoted to Swedish art but the section at the back is foreign art and that is where I am listed. I have had quite a lot of influence in Sweden both in painting and in design, but I have never had any official recognition. I never had any credit, even though in 1959 we changed the character of Swedish design, and I have never had any major article devoted to my painting in any of the culture or art magazines.

The second part of Question 4.4 asks whether I would have benefited from more early recognition. Yes, I would have benefited by early recognition. On the economic side I would not have been forced to devote so much time to design and decoration and I might have been relieved from periodic depressions of the kind that Bomberg experienced because of the lack of understanding and acceptance of any of our ideas.

Apart from public neglect, I have also suffered at the hands of the Bomberg family. Either through viciousness, lack of understanding or ignorance, they have given out information to the press and in catalogues which is false. For example, it was my idea that the Borough Group was formed and I was first President and it started in 1946, whereas most seemed to think that it was started in 1948 when it was re-formed by Bomberg and when he became President. So there are writings attributed to Bomberg which in fact were my writings, although they were edited and extended somewhat by members of the Group and Bomberg himself. But if these writings are compared with the actual writings of Bomberg, there is an enormous difference in style and wording and, if further proof were needed in this matter, I have some of the original notations and the draft copies. So the movement which I created with Bomberg's guidance has seemingly been the greatest factor in my failure to build up any recognition for myself (it is rather like Picasso being excluded from any reference to the Cubist movement).

Not one of the books and articles which have been written on the subject has acknowledged my role in organising the Borough Group. Richard Cork's book on Bomberg is no exception. Except for myself, he went out of his way to interview everybody he could, even to the extent of rushing down to Ronda to interview the mayor. What relevance that had to Bomberg's life, I cannot understand. And yet, although he made no effort to communicate with me, he freely quoted, misquoted and quoted out of context from both my writings and my broadcasts.

Leslie Marr to this day insists that he was a founder member of the Borough Group. This is not true because there is documentary evidence that the Borough Group existed three years before he became a member and, of course, he was one of the reasons why the Borough Group finally dissolved. His painting was at that time, and still is, a pastiche of Bomberg. He has never

had any understanding of Bomberg and this is evident, not only in his paintings but also in his writings and the interviews he has given even up to this year.

I have exhibited rather widely but no exhibition has been what one would call a prestige exhibition, neither have there been any exhibitions which were commercially successful. Very little has been sold and I do not have a particularly good memory of any single exhibition - only nightmares. Every exhibition has been a waste of money, time, energy (especially nervous energy) and the loss of a lot of pictures which were sold too cheaply. The only positive thing to be said about these exhibitions is that a few of the paintings went to people that cared and possibly understood. In other words, they went to good homes.

In 1945 and 1946 when I worked together with the Metzger brothers on a bomb-site outside the Sir John Cass School of Art, all the stone carvings which I had made were destroyed on orders of the director Bainbridge Copnal, our teacher, who appeared to be jealous of our efforts. He labelled them obscene and encouraged the other students one night to attack them with hammers so that they were completely destroyed. The only one which survived was a very large stone carving, a self portrait, which I had in my studio for many years but then vandals and burglars took that, together with my African sculptures. So there is not a single piece of sculpture existing that I did during those two years. Neither is there a photograph.

I have lost many more paintings by vandalism and theft, both from my studio with ordinary burglaries, and through dealers at galleries like the Leger Gallery, the Redfern Gallery and the St. George's Gallery. Occasionally some of these paintings turn up in auctions, much to my surprise.

Robert Erskine at St. Georges Gallery had a number of prints on sale or return, two of which were sold, but I never received any payment. He also had a set of 50 prints which have never been returned. Once, when I was very short of cash, I sold 40 prints as a package deal to the Obelisk Gallery for £2 each. A gallery in Gothenburg sold a print to Ingrid Bergman, but I never received the money because shortly afterwards the gallery went bankrupt.

After the Drian exhibition, six paintings were left there on sale or return but they have never been returned and I have never managed to recover them. They are always stacked away under a lot of other storage so, even to this day, it is impossible to get them out and return them to me, according to the gallery director Halima Nalisch.

My last exhibition in Stockholm (1975) was something of a success and one of my paintings was sold to the Modern Museum in Stockholm but, nevertheless, the sales only covered the expenses. There was rather a good critic and many of the other painters were enthusiastic. Several hundred people came to the private view. I had not anticipated selling very much but, because of the response, we decided that, three months later, we would put on another exhibition. This time we decided to orientate the whole exhibition towards selling, both to private individuals and to architects, and the idea was to stimulate interest with architects so that we might receive some commissions from them. The gallery was to be the agent. As this kind of design and decoration had given us our economic stability over the last 20 years or so, we anticipated very good sales but the gallery made a fatal mistake. The private view happened on the first day of a national public holiday, so that all the people had left town. The result was that there were barely 20 or 30 people who came to the private view and we sold very little - two or three private sales and one large piece to a hospital. Although the gallery retained 100 or so pieces for sale or return, nothing more was sold and they lapsed as agents. We did not receive a single commission through their efforts. The fact was they didn't make any effort.

Ironically our biggest public success (and even critical success) in terms of quantity of newspaper coverage, were the exhibitions that we organized under the name Marstrand Designers, first in the Rhosska Museum in Gothenburg (on the invitation of the director Goran Axel-Nilsson) and then at the Konsthallen in Lund during 1962 and, in 1965, at the Varbergs Museum. But these exhibitions were design oriented and displayed curtains and wallpapers both from Sweden and England. There was nothing for sale, so they were really prestige exhibitions which gave us no economic return but which provided a lot of publicity for the manufacturers of our designs.

The exhibition brought in people from long distances away because we advertised that, twice a day, we would give demonstrations of printing and everybody who came would get one of our prints for free. In these demonstrations we made small prints of flowers with our special way of using silk-screen and then we gave them away directly to those who were watching. The public paid an entrance fee of 5 Kr to the Museum so the Museum made the money and we got the publicity.

It was during this exhibition at the Varbergs Museum in 1965 that Maj Nilson left Marstrand Designers. This was because she felt that the publicity which we gained by doing this was not worth the expense of our time and materials.

So the story of our exhibitions is a story of a series of frustrations and disasters and I feel I have never been given the recognition which my work deserved. Success as such has been on a practical level. Instead of commercializing or prostituting my art, I found a market and even created a market for the twin by-products of art - design and decoration.

Even this field had its problems because we were way out and some years before our time, but we had the satisfaction of seeing that our activity functioned and, to some extent, we were paid for our services. It was in this area that we were dealing with the pleasure principle - not entertainment, not magic, but with making a product which gave a direct response to the senses.

As I have said elsewhere, this was our prostitution. We worked to order to give pleasure for money. We worked objectively and scientifically; we analyzed the market and we provided the product that the market required but at the same time we did not follow taste. We were in the forefront in creating taste. We did not follow the fashions of the day, which is what most designers do.

In contrast to my work as a designer, when I work as a creative artist I am not concerned at all with any scientific analysis of public need. I was never concerned with the big, wide public whose only need was a backdrop; a background to give them ease and contentment. 'Art proper' is concerned with ideas. Far from providing people with ease and contentment, 'art proper' will inevitably introduce problems into their lives and, therefore, those who want a quiet life should take all the art down from their walls. But as regards the number of people willing to (or capable of) performing that necessary act of engagement (the creative act on the part of the public, which is a necessary condition before meaning can be extracted from the work of art) - for that kind of public people may be few in number and one can be content, as Collingwood has pointed out, even if there are only five or six people in the world who understand your work. Even so small a number can still constitute a public; a public that is vitally necessary because one cannot create alone. By creating one is solving a kind of universal problem deep within oneself and bringing the idea into consciousness so that it might be recognized by people who want to understand. After all, if an Englishman wishes to read Chinese, he must first learn Chinese and there are very few people in England who are prepared for that kind of engagement. It is the same with the public for art - they must learn the non-verbal language of art if they wish to be able to read with understanding.

8

Bomberg's Legacy

Now we turn to Question 1.8: Was Bomberg's death an event which deeply affected you? Yes, indeed. It affected me as deeply as the death of my father. My relationship with Bomberg was like that of father to a son and, in both cases, I was left with the feeling that the dialogue had not come to an end. Bomberg's death deprived me of continued dialogue and it deprived me of a Master that I would like to have continued to be apprenticed to.

We were all left wondering in what direction Bomberg would have developed. It was never Bomberg's intention to breed a brood of imitators. But in the work by some of the painters that belonged to the Borough Group and the Borough Bottega and even many people working outside these groups (but owing some kind of allegiance to Bomberg) we can see weak imitations both of Bomberg's brushwork and his forms. It is a sad fact that he rejected his most vital students and the ones that later proceeded to contribute something of their own directly arising out of his teaching, whereas he sustained relationships with the kind of person - the 'lady fish-faces' - that he had hated all his life. A major problem of Bomberg's was the difficulty he had in his relationships with people and his apparent inability to assess character. This is confirmed by the stories printed in the New Yorker magazine (November, 1990, p.53).

There was a sense, of course, in which the whole tragic story defied rational understanding ... Yet within the tale of what was done to Bomberg lies embedded the smaller tale of what he did to other people, which, it turns out, was often rather disagreeable. Cork's narrative contains a long train of snarling, Hollywood-style metamorphoses, in which our hero's darker self blackens a fellow-student's eye; brains a certain Professor Brown with a palette; organizes a revolt within the Omega Workshops; tries to provoke a fistfight between his brother, who was a professional boxer, and Wyndam Lewis; earns the enduring hatred of Henri Gaudier-Brzeska; so infuriates Ben Nicholson on a painting trip to Lugano that Nicholson buys him a ticket home to England; falls afoul of the very Zionist cultural institutions on whose patronage he subsists; antagonizes a detachment of Bedouin guards; alienates his friend Muirhead Bone; obliges his family to live in a tent; and, in a particularly absurd incident, throws a pile of baby clothes out the window. As spectators, we may find all this quite rollicking, but nothing suggests that either of his two wives found it especially entertaining.

Although he had very difficult relations both with his wife and his step-daughter, nevertheless he gave precedence to his family against the need of making group activity. In many instances he sacrificed his art and his ideas to his family, even though he had urged his students to do without family and sex and any kind of domestication as this was a hindrance to the creative act. He used to say, for example, you should trample over the dead body of your grandmother in order to paint. He would cite his friend and colleague Jacob Kramer as an excellent example of how to behave, who, when his father died rushed up to his dying father's bedside, not specifically to be with his father but, rather, to paint his dead body.

There is no doubt in my mind that Bomberg was a most extraordinary teacher as well as painter, but everybody agrees, including his step-daughter Dinora and his wife Lilian, that he was a very difficult man to get along with.

I can add to these stories several more, including the one about Edna Mann and Bomberg's attitude to her pregnancy, plus the occasion when I physically prevented Bomberg from killing one of the park-keepers with a hammer in order to stop the man removing our paintings during our open-air exhibition on the Thames embankment. I stopped Bomberg's arm which held the hammer and which was about to crash on to the man's head. This incident resulted in Bomberg losing his voice and being confined to bed for a week. Richard Cork writes that: "He seems to have suffered from a deep seated emotional insecurity which impelled him to cloak it in arrogance." I think Cork takes the easy solution. In my view nearly every artist, painter, writer, musician and dancer seems to suffer from the same kind of emotional insecurity so that this assessment becomes meaningless.

Peter Fuller, in his book *Beyond the Crisis in Art* (Readers and Writers, London, 1980, p.147), asks the question "why was Bomberg so neglected, especially as, within a year of his death a gaggle of critics were momentarily to be heard proclaiming him as among the finest British painters of the century?" The reason why Bomberg received this praise after his death was because I had been involved in discussions with the critics John Russell, Neville Wallace, Andrew Forge and David Sylvester. My contact with Forge and Sylvester came about through Andrew Forge's relationship with Dorothy Mead. It was this contact with the critics, sustained by Dorothy and myself for several years, which brought Bomberg to the attention of the critics. Both Dorothy and I had long discussions with Coldstream's right-hand man, Andrew Forge, who was in constant telephone contact with his colleague David Sylvester, and it was mainly these two critics which began to formulate the rehabilitation of Bomberg.

However, in spite of David Sylvester's enthusiasm and in spite of the fact that he believed it the finest English painting of its time, he nevertheless was stuck in the bog of style. He evaluated everything in terms of style, which is quite absurd because that is like talking in terms of fashion. Even when I introduced Lundquist to him he failed to see the difference between the thick paint of Lundquist and the thick paint of Auerbach. His attitude to art was governed by his stylistic interpretation of history and so he relegated Bomberg's work to no more than a footnote in the history of art. Sylvester always preferred Auerbach to Bomberg or ourselves. This might be one of the reasons why Bomberg, some thirty years later, is still not included in the history books of art. Comparison is rarely made with his contemporaries or with people coming later. In reference to Sylvester's assessment of Bomberg, Peter Fuller had this to say (on the page following the quote above): "It may be that many of the footnotes belong to the text, and that much of the existing text can be safely relegated to the footnotes."

Legend has it, of course, that Bomberg's rehabilitation was brought about by Lilian Bomberg and Dinora through their untiring efforts in promoting him, whereas, in fact, all they did at that time was to coordinate an exhibition with the Arts Council (which, in any case, Andrew Forge was instrumental in promoting, together with Joanna Drew). It has also been said that Lilian his wife, sacrificed her painting life to Bomberg's art, but nobody has tried to explain why she never came to prominence as a painter when she became free from both domestic and financial problems. After Bomberg's death she continued to live and work for some twenty-five years and was able to travel widely round the world without any outside financial help other than the proceeds from Bomberg's paintings, which were now selling for very high sums.

Another fiction which has been perpetuated by Lilian's account of her life with Bomberg is that his energies were drained by his students and that his teaching left no time for painting. But it is clear from the letters which Bomberg asked Peter Richmond to write in May 1957 that Bomberg cherished the memory of his relationships with his students and he was longing for a reunion. The students provided him with a kind of stimulation which Lilian did not understand. In any case, before he was ever involved with teaching students, there were long periods of depression in Bomberg's life during which he was unable to paint.

Since Bomberg's death my relationship and meetings with Lilian Bomberg, Dinora Mendelson and Leslie Marr have been very sporadic, mainly because every meeting ended with argument as to dates and times. These were documented at the time they happened but, since Bomberg's death, through these three, all dates and times relating to me and my relationship with Bomberg have either been false or left out altogether in all the catalogues and books on Bomberg. I had no confidence in Lilian because she lacked judgment and had no understanding of what Bomberg was all about. During the hanging of a Borough Group exhibition which Bomberg and I were hanging, Lilian suddenly swept in, pointed to one of my paintings without knowing that it was mine and said (because she could never distinguish between the paintings of various members of the Group): "What is that dreadful thing? Is it a dead rabbit?" This painting happened to be one that Bomberg had singled out as the best painting by any member of the Group that year. In 1962 in the exhibition at the Crane Kalman Gallery, Joseph Darracott bought it for the Rutherford Collection.

Another incident concerning Lilian was rather more serious. In 1947, I sold about eight paintings to the antique dealer Mendelson, who had a shop in the Kings Road. I did not see these paintings again until 1965. They then belonged to a man called James Crabtree and he proudly showed them to me as paintings by Bomberg. These paintings had certificates stuck on the back, signed by Lilian Bomberg, to the effect that they were genuine Bombergs. One of the paintings, a portrait head, was claimed by Lilian Bomberg to be a portrait of herself painted by Bomberg in 1937. In fact it was a portrait of Dorothy Mead, painted by me in the latter part of 1946 or early 1947. Crabtree asked me to sign a paper to the effect that the paintings were painted by Cliff Holden. I agreed, and signed in the presence of Hallstrom and Dorothy Mead.

In June 1968 I had a telephone call from Mr. Barry Stewart-Penrose, the art correspondent for The Observer. Somehow he had found out about this curious question. He was going to write an article for The Observer and he wanted all the details. I wrote him a long letter and we corresponded and talked on the telephone for some time but, finally, for reasons unexplained to me, the article was dropped. I think this was probably because Lilian Bomberg took back her authentication of these pictures which Crabtree had bought from Mendelson. Mendelson, of course, was the father of Dinora; a fact that I discovered several years after I sold the paintings to Mendelson.

Leslie Marr, in all his references and catalogues and in his interviews with the press, always claimed to be a founder member of the Borough Group. This is false. He was only a founder member of the Bomberg re-organized Borough Group in 1948. The Borough Group had been operative for two years before that and had been under discussion as early as 1944. It was out of these discussions that I founded the Borough Group and I was given the task of president by Bomberg himself. These questions of dates might be considered as splitting hairs, but when one considers the evolution of movements which are very important in the history of art, a year or two can have a profound effect on the evolution of ideas - take, for example, the history of the Cubists and the Fauvists.

Dorothy Mead had an enormous influence during her time as student at the Slade and as President of the Young Contemporaries exhibitions and then, later, through her involvement with the London Group. Our close collaboration lasted until her death in 1975. She also continued to work closely with Dennis Creffield and they often used to go painting on the same landscape, both in London and Brighton. It should be noted that although Dorothy had such a success at the Slade, gaining all prizes except the Tonks prize, she was never offered a one-man show in London. While she was exhibiting with the Borough Group she also exhibited with the London Group. Later she became a member and then she became Vice-President and finally she was the President. This position she held with success until she was forced to resign due to her last sickness. She never had a one-man show in London, but she did exhibit with the four of us - Holden, Creffield, Mead and Richmond - in Stockholm and in 1956/7 together with myself in Sweden. It was a tragedy that Dorothy Mead was cut off at her most creative point by sickness and death.

Peter Richmond met Nora Richmond and they subsequently married. They came to stay with me when I was with Dorothy in Spain, but then they moved to Ronda where they worked together in the school that Bomberg founded and after that we lost contact for many years.

I had a more sporadic contact with Edna Mann. We used to correspond occasionally and meet whenever we could. Finally she sent her daughter, Diana, as a student to me for one year. This contact lasted until Edna Mann's death in 1985.

Dennis Creffield came to me when he was 16 years old and at 17 I introduced him to some Jesuits and to Bomberg. These two events completely changed his life to such an extent that he, even today, refers to me as his father. Creffield introduced Anthony Hatwell and Roy Oxlade to Bomberg. I have had an intermittent contact with Oxlade - never a very happy one. He came down to Spain to Torrox to visit me for some weeks; we met again in Wales and, in 1975, he wrote begging me to receive him to help him with some writing about Bomberg.

The last words I received from Dorothy before she died were: "Beware of Oxlade." She proved right. Oxlade spent a week with me in which he tape-recorded many interviews from which, together with interviews with various other people and access to Bomberg's papers, he wrote a thesis for an MA qualification from the Royal College of Art in 1976. This thesis is wholly academic and betrays no understanding whatever of Bomberg's teaching or of his painting. Several of his quotations from me were out of context and gave a wholly distorted view of Bomberg and my relations with him. I was astonished that, in spite of these misunderstandings, he was able to write a thesis which made him a 'Master of Arts.'

In Cork's book *David Bomberg* (Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1987, p.263) I am quoted as follows: "It had to be in an almost ecstatic drunken state, in which we project ourselves into reality state." This quotation comes from the broadcast which I made for the BBC called 'An Artist as Teacher' which was a tribute to David Bomberg one year after his death. (It was transmitted on the Third Programme at 8.50 - 9.05 pm, Monday, 29th September 1958.) Oxlade has taken similar remarks of mine and suggested that I was meaning that one must be literally drunk. Perhaps intoxication would have been a better word for me to have used than the word "drunken." Certainly other people in the past have used it effectively. For example, Baudelaire has been quoted as saying, that he "experiences things intensely, sees everything as new, is always drunk," and so he remains in touch with the gifts of inspiration. Delacroix often spoke of the frenzy, and to quote Baudelaire again: "It is essential to be always intoxicated, everything lies in that, it is the one and only thing." His meaning is that one must be prepared to go to the utmost limits of oneself. This is surely what Delacroix meant to point out when asked himself: "How comes it that, in a half-intoxicated state, certain men - and I am one

of them - acquire a lucidity of vision far greater, in many cases, than they have when they are calm?" So that we should be in no doubt as to what he means here by intoxication, he adds: "Happy are those who, like Wolff and other great men, have been able to reach this inspired condition while drinking water and eating moderately."

If Cork had continued to quote me, he would have seen that I was distinguishing between this ecstatic drunken state and the state of someone who was actually drunk and who would then tend to focus attention on a part or the clarity of a detail. And so a man who is drunk behaves in a way which is quite opposite to the way in which we approached the act of painting. Our intentions were to embrace the whole.

In Oxlade's writing there is some confusion as to how we were using the word 'mood'. Bomberg and I meant it, on the one hand, in terms of the meaning or content of paintings and, on the other hand, as a way of remembering the feelings we had experienced during the act of creation. We would try to observe and then remember how it had felt working creatively in front of the canvas, as against those other times when we were working mechanically (by means of an intellectualization). Observing this was a way of knowing for oneself whether the activity had created something or not. We recognized that it was not possible to make an immediate judgment merely by looking at the created image.

There is also confusion in Cork's, Oxlade's and Michelmore's mind regarding the intervention Bomberg undertook with the students by taking part to the extent of working on the actual painting, so that it was a complete collaboration of student and teacher. I cannot understand their astonishment for, if one looks back in history, from Henry Moore to Rembrandt, Rubens, Michelangelo and Leonardo (to name only a few), it is well known that many artists could never have had such a tremendous production without the help and collaboration of the students. Oxlade, of course, as he had so little understanding, found the intervention on the teacher's part had an inhibiting effect and he was unable to continue the image once Bomberg had put his mark on it. Many students were unable to recognize the idea. They were continually confusing individualism with the unique image. So even though it was pointed out by the master, they were incapable, as were Oxlade and Michelmore, of continuing the activity. It therefore remained Bomberg's idea and his image, even though the student had executed it and even though it was produced with their activity. He had sought to extract and preserve the image which the student was trying to create but which only the master was able to recognize. This demonstrated that the seeking of the unique image could be a collaborative effort engaging the minds and feelings of the participants if their minds and feelings were in tune. Instead of writing about Bomberg and about the Group as one who was committed and involved and with some understanding, Oxlade wrote not as an artist but as a person once removed. In a way he was writing like a critic.

I had a sporadic contact with Kossoff and Auerbach for many years but we did not have a close collaboration, partly because they never joined the Borough Group and partly because there was such a divergence in our views about painting. Auerbach was pretentious and eclectic in taste. He looked at everything and finally settled for Sickert. When he is quoted it is most often to stress his sense of his own honesty and this always makes me very suspicious. Anyone who talks about honesty is usually very dishonest. One does not have to talk about honesty. One can say that art itself is a distinctive way in which truth comes into being. Nietzsche is even inclined to draw the conclusion that there could be no such thing as truth. This is closer to my position where I consider that we are all searching for the truth. Although we strive for truth, it is an impossible task, for we are always fooling ourselves that this is what we are doing. An element of falseness is there and to deny this evades the issue.

Auerbach is on record as having said that he is a great admirer of Sickert. This is rather surprising when all the critics point out the connection between Auerbach and Bomberg. Bomberg himself hated Sickert and all his ideas. Andrew Forge says: "Bomberg had studied for several years in evening classes under Sickert. And then he had gone to the Slade. There is no evidence that anything of Sickert's powerful teaching rubbed off on him. He seems to have had an inborn sense of the monumental. The earliest surviving drawings testify to it. This put him in a different world from Sickert, for whom the visual impression was everything. For Bomberg the eye was a stupid organ, almost helpless when unsupported by other senses. He was a natural anti-Impressionist - it is hard to imagine him even considering the possibility that a drawing could be to do with fleeting impressions, or that design could have anything to do with accident." Of course, at this time it is quite likely that Andrew Forge had not read anything of the Bomberg papers for we find that Bomberg is also concerned with the phenomena through which design happens. To quote Bomberg: "Good judgment is through good drawing - from the nervous system to the sensory of the brain - it is the combination of eurhythmics, euphony and poetry, and when the good draughtsman draws, the muses come to dance. Then the imagination is given full play, and design happens. They then become muses."

Bomberg was a member of the avant-garde during the First World War. It was these paintings which were seized upon by Andrew Forge as a great discovery and this made Bomberg's reputation after his death. But, yet again, there was a distortion of the truth by the critics and the art historians. No one saw the significance of Bomberg's development in his later years and no critic has tried to explain why they should think that the paintings of Kossof and Auerbach were a development of Bomberg's ideas. Critics say, "ah, they were students of Bomberg, therefore they were influenced by Bomberg," but they do not bother to really look at the paintings and compare them with Bomberg's paintings. They are totally different and the difference resulted from the fact that both these painters, Kossof and Auerbach, were not influenced by Bomberg but by the ideas generated collectively by the Borough Group. What they gained from the Borough Group was, through lack of understanding, not a stimulus from the idea but a stimulus from the activity. What they took was a gimmick - their forms are academic and the gimmick of thick paint merely results in a curious combination of caricature and decorative brush strokes.

Auerbach's relation to the Borough Group is equivalent to Munnings' relation to French Impressionism. His early paintings were imitations of Paul Klee and Braque and his later daubs disguise an academic image which would have been anathema to Bomberg. In the early days, as I have said, we all threw paint around and waded in it and Auerbach has taken this up as a gimmick. A visit to his studio in the 50's showed that all the dropping of paint onto the floor had resulted in a thickness of paint of several inches. One presumes that he has failed to understand that it is the image and the idea that matters, not the materials and their manipulation. I think it was Kant that said that all perception involves the formation of a judgment. If we say that to perceive is an act of judgment then we can say it is also a moral act. It was judgment that Bomberg tried to teach and it was precisely this attitude to art that Kossoff and Auerbach have never taken up in their work.

I would like here to quote Peter Fuller (from an article entitled 'Auerbach versus Clemente' in *Art Monthly*, February, 1983, p.11) who said of Auerbach that "one could emphasize here Auerbach's consummate mastery of drawing, his relatively recent flowering as a colourist capable of playing the full emotional range, the increasing surety of his touch, which has enabled him to shift from mere accretion of pigment to a vividly lyrical handling which loses nothing in sensuousity, his evocation of the great tradition of Rembrandt's humanistic painting, which he called up to redeem his expressionism from solipsistic subjectivity."

Such nonsense use of words in relation to Auerbach, and even the idea that he was a superb draughtsman, was attacked by Ian Biggs (in a letter published in the next issue of *Art Monthly*, March, 1983, p.24): "His drawing is based on crude use of a traditional structuring approach filled out with quirky mannerisms and rhetorical flourishes which, for all their superficial appearance of search and discovery, are expressive of nothing more than a generalized emotion." Biggs continued to say that Auerbach's paintings differ only in that the processes of composition of a structure and in-filling are repeated again and again with slight modifications. What may once have been a fresh, if simplistic, use of a formal device found in Rembrandt (and learnt no doubt from Bomberg) has become an end in itself, a mechanical and empty repetition of certain well rehearsed acts.

In respect to Kossof's painting I would like to quote from a review by Brian Sewell which appeared in the *Evening Standard* during August of 1996. Kossof was having a retrospective exhibition at the Tate Gallery and in 1995 he had been chosen to represent Britain at the Venice Biennale. But despite so much public acclaim Sewell was unable to find any merit in his work.

As for Leon Kossof, no crueller deed was ever done in art than to expose this wretched painter to the rigours of a retrospective exhibition. He has had the impertinence to claim a place as Bomberg's pupil, but of that considerable man he understood even less than Auerbach, his drawing child-like, his mud-pie palette lifeless, his paint opaque and dense. Few painters professing to be professional have in a working life of 50 years begun so badly and advanced so little. A retrospective exposed Ron Kitaj's inflated reputation to irreparable damage and the Tate should have learned from that exhibition that the so-called School of London may stand together in mutual support and variety, but show them singly and the honest critical eye must tumble them like ninepins. Poor Kossof: decent man, rotten painter - this exposure will undo him.

Certainly the road taken by Kossoff and Auerbach would not have been in the least interesting for Bomberg. It is significant that while Bomberg continued to be rejected and failed to get exhibitions even with Helen Lessore, nevertheless, it was this academic wing of Kossoff and Auerbach which did achieve exhibitions along with the Kitchen Sink School at the Beaux Arts Gallery. Against the success of Kossof and Auerbach, Bomberg himself, during his lifetime, was ignored by critics, dealers, art historians and the general public and praised by critics for the wrong reasons after his death.

Here is a part of an article from the *New Statesman* magazine (3rd April, 1964, p.534) in which Andrew Forge makes an appraisal of my work, as well as Mead's and Creffield's. The question of Bomberg's influence on Kossof and Auerbach is quickly dismissed and he has understood that, by contrast, the three of us were working out of a common philosophy of art which we had become committed to during our time as students of Bomberg. He has recognized that we valued the authentic idea more than "a searched-for originality."

I offer a brief run-down on some of the Bomberg painters in the hope that one day it will be possible for them to be looked at in terms of their individual qualities. Frank Auerbach and Leon Kossof are the two ex-Bomberg pupils who have become best known, but his teaching has so little evident bearing on their work that it is not important to discuss them here.

Cliff Holden, who was probably closer to Bomberg than any, has painted certain subjects for years, seated figures, double standing figures, treating each picture as a new exploration of a narrow obsessive field. Everything he does has a quality which is both primitivistic and sumptuous. He is a powerful and erotic colourist and the crisis of solid and void which was one of the basic subjects of Bomberg's teaching is with him a continually renewed experience.

Dorothy Mead also has a certain primitivism, but with her it is less a matter of mood than of monumental intention. Her work is often cold, both in colour and in structure, pared down, and worked over with an often brutal indifference to felicities of handling and surface. She is both hard and refined, classical in the sense that she seems to be distanced from her work and insistent that its authority must come wholly from its outward forms and not from any more intimate exchanges of mood. If mural-painting existed in an ideal England, she would be busy.

Dennis Creffield is the most like Bomberg in style. His work has a flowing lyricism and great elegance which sometimes extend into sweetness.

The fact that all of them, and the post-Coldstream painters too, whom I hope to discuss at a later date, work out of a common philosophy of art which they value more highly than a searched-for originality does not mean that they lack individuality: rather the reverse. What emerges from their work is a deeply founded, unbidden distinction that entirely vindicates their position. They are at cross-purposes with much that is acceptable at the moment, and none has so far received more than token recognition, although they are in mid-career.

The critics Lawrence Alloway, David Sylvester and Andrew Forge, amongst others, were writing in the early 1960's about the emergence of a new figuration in Britain. At that time it largely referred to the remnants of the Borough Group but the emphasis and direction was obscured by a third generation of young painters and the Young Contemporaries who were influenced by Mead and Creffield. Dubsky met Dorothy Mead at the Slade where they were studying together and she introduced him to me. We encouraged him to carry on with his painting but we had no influence on his work. One could say that he was reacting against what we were doing. Dorothy's influence on students like Dubsky was undermined by her status as a fellow student, whereby she was not able to exercise any authority over them as a teacher. Unlike Dubsky, many of them were attracted to what we might call the 'Bomberg ethos' and, later on, I believe that a number of them gravitated towards Auerbach and some of them even became his students. But as they had no direct contact with Dorothy's work as an artist and understood little of the intentions of Bomberg, what resulted was a dark mess of paint which had little relation to the ideas of the Borough Group or Bomberg. By the middle 1960's there were enough painters working with these mannerisms for the critics to refer to them as the 'Bomberg School.' This was an example of a movement created by critics and killed by critics. As someone said once, the chief reason why artists suspect critics is that they have arbitrary powers which they use in an arbitrary manner.

To give some indication of how the critics were writing about the Borough Group in the early 60's I would like to quote from an article 'Against the Rimless Men' by Bryan Robertson (London Magazine, June 1963, p.61). In this article he reviews an exhibition by Patrick Proctor who had shortly before been at the Slade and his work was directly influenced by Dorothy Mead in a way which was typical of many students who were there at that time.

The paintings and drawings accompanying this text are by a young artist, Patrick Procktor, exhibiting his work for the first time at the Redfern Gallery, and whose youthful exuberance and panache may help to provide an answer from English painting. He is part of an exceptionally gifted and lively generation at present finding its feet as artists in this country; but his own painting has a breath of life, an expansiveness, and a willingness to risk everything at all points of the compass which combine to make his work one of the most tonic events in a decade. Procktor has only just found the self confidence to realize these qualities.

As a student at the Slade he found, glancingly, a temporary solution for his problems of commitment in the cautious expressionism of the Bomberg-inspired painters, with their insistence on tonal domination (almost as a moral doctrine) and a parallel avoidance of colour - in that context, a frivolous irrelevance. Bomberg's Jewish expressionism was an unconscious extension of pre-war Euston Road aesthetic beliefs, so that it was hardly surprising to find his disciples working at the Slade. A dominating factor in Procktor's work, however, is an incessant concern for movement, either explicit, or implied in the arrested or potential thrust or swirl of a static figure.

These painters influenced by Bomberg tended to equate form and even volume with weight, and space with density. Their earth-bound, earth-coloured canvases are immovably still and locked. A more helpful mentor for Procktor at the Slade was Keith Vaughan, whose unassailable belief in the reality, dignity and pathos of the human figure does not always rest upon a rock of static monumentality but also strives, continually, to point the inflections of movement by abstract means which can distort a figure with classical logic, and recently within the handling of the paint itself. At all events, Procktor was conscious of the Bomberg ethos, resisted the tyranny of its narrow orthodoxy, and doubtless found its conception too retrogressive and academic.

Robertson refers to "Bomberg-inspired painters with their insistence on tonal domination" but, of course, in the Borough Group we never insisted on any such thing. I cannot defend the work produced by our imitators but, in our case, there was never an "avoidance of colour." As I have said before, we used earth colours because they were all we could afford - it had nothing whatever to do with Euston Road aesthetic beliefs. We avoided both the tonality of the Euston Road Group and the visual mathematical precision of the Coldstream type of painting. In design and painting we always rejected the fallacy of realism which aims at the illusionistic rendering of appearances. We strove for figuration, not realism, through abstraction - abstraction in figuration. The abstract design is therefore always the paramount reality. I think it was Patrick Heron who once said in the 50's that non-figurative painters release rhythm without waiting to match it with an exterior configuration. Heron thought that they were evading something and that one should try to equate an inner impulse to form, that is the felt rhythm, with an outer reality. According to him this reality can be observed but I prefer to substitute 'observed' with 'felt,' by which I mean to suggest that the reality is not the object seen but our physical relation with the object through movement.

Although by the middle 60's the so-called 'School of Bomberg' and the growing reputations of Kossof and Auerbach had done much to obscure the genuine connection which our work had with Bomberg, nevertheless this connection had been acknowledged by at least one critic some years before, in 1959. In that year Mead, Creffield and I contributed to an exhibition entitled 'Figure Variations.' This exhibition was organised by Miss E. Damaglou in her own house which she called 'The Paris Gallery.' I had met her in 1956 when I made a poster

for a mixed exhibition which she organised at the Parsons Gallery, entitled 'Aspects of Contemporary English Painting' (2nd - 27th January, 1956). In this review of the 'Figure Variations' exhibition by Keith Sutton which appeared in the Art News and Review (Saturday, 21st November, 1959) it is interesting to note that we are described as 'Bombergian' and that our work is equated with action painting. It is also interesting that, at this stage, Mario Dubsy is still grouped together with us.

'Figure Variations'

Appel and Atlan, le Brocquy and the Bratby are as distinct from one another as any four artists could be. What brings them together in this exhibition is that each has left the human image sufficiently distinct in their paintings for one to assume that the human image is their subject matter. But all such assumptions must be treated with suspicion otherwise the viewer will go round comparing the images just to see which looks most "real" and will forget how very different chalk is from cheese.

The one group in this lively exhibition where comparisons are of value is the row of 'Bombergians' - Creffield, Mead, Dubsy and Holden. They are not of equal maturity and effect but they show a common concern with the figure in front of the artist as a potent object for the artist to be *concerned* about. Not in the nineteenth century way of figure (Mankind) in his environment but in the twentieth century way of artist painting a picture - the artist discovering for himself an equivalent in paint for the situation which is visually recognisable. This quality of self-consciousness about the act of painting connects them with the energetic displays of action painting on the one hand while the degree of figuration and the mood of their colour schemes relates them to the social consciousness of the German expressionists. Were they in an exhibition where the social dialectic was stressed they might be seen to be rather ponderous in the manner of youthful lawmakers but, strangely, surrounded by more extrovert types, bright and sometimes flippant, they do stand up to them by force of integrity and, in the case of Mead, by artistic sensibility.

This has been something of a digression but I wanted to indicate some of the reasons why I have been so disappointed with many of the students who have not fulfilled their early promise. This has been due to a complete lack of understanding of the kind of direction that could be undertaken from Bomberg's teaching. Too many of them merely made a pastiche, a continuation of what David Sylvester refers to as 'style', an imitation of the gestures and brush strokes. I was especially disappointed that Michelmores has appeared to have made nothing of his architecture through Bomberg's teaching and, in fact, did not really make any contribution in painting either. I had a close collaboration for several years with Gus and Max Metzger, both in the mediums of painting and sculpture, but Max gave up painting in favour of studying agriculture in Paris, and Gus eventually became known as an auto-destructive artist.

There can be no proof that what Bomberg tried to communicate was what he really meant. All one can say is that all verbal ideas act only as a stimulus to activity and out of the activity ideas come about. However, I think that, by separating and differentiating between the different activities, I have managed to steer clear of the kind of painting that Bomberg loathed; the pseudo-scientific attitudes of the Impressionists, the wild romantic brush strokes of the German Expressionists, the concern with romantic detail of much of English landscape in the form of Sutherland and Piper stemming, of course, from Samuel Palmer. It is interesting to compare our

loyalty and gratitude to Bomberg, the painter, and Bomberg, the master, to Bomberg's own background, where he repeatedly stressed his hatred of his teachers like Brown, Tonks, Sergeant, and especially Sickert.

Bomberg showed us the way - a path which started one might say with Giotto and continues from Massaccio through to Rembrandt (not forgetting Uccello, Piero della Francesca, Goya and Velasquez) until, in modern times, we can trace the path from our own Turner, through Delacroix and Van Gogh, to Cezanne. But, in showing us the path and the direction, he could not and would not indicate where the path led to.

I think, in many respects, we have gone further than the Cubists in extending the ideas from Cezanne and we were concerned with similar ideas to those of the Tachiste and Action Painters and Abstract Expressionists several years before they appeared in England. But it seemed to us that these movements only handled a very small element of the creative act, whereas what we have tried to do is to combine all those ideas and methods into some coherent direction. We know more or less the direction but what we don't know is what we will find when we get there - that is the exciting part. That is the mystery.

Thinking of the term 'a new figuration,' I am often reminded of a quotation from Van Gogh's letters (*Van Gogh, A Self-Portrait*, Thames and Hudson, London, 1961, p.289):

Who will be in figure painting in the way that Monet is in landscape? However, you must feel, as I do, that such a one will come. Rodin? He does not work in colour, he's not the one. But the painter of the future will be a colourist such as has never existed. Manet was working towards it, but as you know the impressionists have already got a stronger colour than Manet. But this painter who is to come - I can't imagine him living in little cafes, working away with a lot of false teeth, and going to Zouaves' brothel, as I do.

But I think that I am right when I feel that in a later generation it will come, and that as for us we must work as we can toward that end, without doubting and without wavering.

How do I view Bomberg's position in twentieth century art? I find this rather an odd question because my view of Bomberg's position in the history of art is probably totally different to that of every other art historian and critic.

It is common knowledge that the attitude of many British critics is governed by the international art market and, at the time when they could have helped us, both Forge and Sylvester looked towards America. It should be remembered that Herbert Read and Lawrence Alloway had introduced Tachism and Action Painting to London in the middle 50's and that it was during this time that the Kitchen Sink Painters and Kossof and Auerbach had stolen our rightful voice and our potential gallery, the Beaux Arts Gallery, where Helen Lessore was the director. I say that the Beaux Arts Gallery was our potential gallery because we considered that Helen Lessore could have completed her stable by including myself, Creffield, Mead, Richmond and Bomberg when she already had the Kossoff, Auerbach and Lundquist. I think the reason why she did not take us stems from my days on the Community Farm in Worcestershire where I met Nommie Durell. In 1948 she shared a house in Frognal, Hampstead, with Helen Lessore and, for a time, Dorothy and I rented rooms from Nommie in the same house. Nommie and Helen were very anti-Bomberg. They both made drawings in the style of Gaudier Brzeska and I am quite sure that Dorothy and I made derogatory remarks about their efforts, so that

Helen Lessore was not inclined to help us when she had a gallery of her own and was in a position to do so. However in spite of this she still gave Lundquist a show which was a great success. But this only came about after I had spent more than nine years promoting Lundquist to her and to others with slides, films and articles about his work.

I think it was that Appolinaire of the New York Renaissance, Harold Rosenberg, that first coined the phrase 'action painting.' He meant that painters began to consider the canvas as an area in which to act rather than as a space in which to reproduce, redesign, analyze or express an actual or imagined object. Thus, the canvas was no longer the medium for a picture so much as the record of an event. Pollock, for example, (and also Tapiés from Spain) used time as a perpetual motion dominated by the need to repeat itself endlessly without pause. To interrupt the movement would mean breaking the space-time continuum. According to Pollock, only death could be the ultimate liberation which would break the cycle of repetition to which we are all condemned for life.

Years before these American artists made their appearance in England, Bomberg and myself and the members of the Borough Group were developing the same strategies in painting towards what has been called 'the new figuration.' This parallel even extends to the kind of terms by which they labelled their activity, that is the Tache (the emphasis on 'the mark') and Action Painting (with its emphasis on action, on movement in time and the physical, the design over the whole canvas, the turning around of the canvas, working upside down, using the tricks of Matisse and Derain, turning your back on the object, projecting yourself into the object and, thereby, into an imagined or virtual space through actual space). So what I am saying is that Bomberg and the Borough Group were either precursors or, at least, working parallel with the Americans.

My Approach to Painting

It has been said that in the beginning was the word. I prefer to think that before the word came the dance, painting and music - a fundamental mode of communication - body language, drawing, making images, symbols and certainly a form of expression which we today cannot fully understand.

The painting of a child has no relation to the painting the child will do as an adult. Child's painting is of quite a different order, character and intention from that of an adult. A child's feeling comes before seeing. Most children stop painting when they reach their adolescence. Children draw not by what they see but by what they know through their tactile sensations. The adult draws what he has learned to see. Therefore, as the eye harnessed to knowledge often lies, it is essential for the artist to strive for the child's physical approach to phenomena instead of painting through the conventions current at the time. We see what we know. But what we know is not through direct seeing or feeling but through an accumulation of knowledge.

It was not until I had children of my own, that I fully understood the kind of corruption that takes place with child art. It is not so much the teachers corrupting the children, as I had earlier thought, but a change which happens when the children begin to read and write. The act of making letters, of making and understanding symbols, produced a radical change in the direction of their drawings. With the acquisition of more and more knowledge and all the visual pressures which result from reproduction, printing, photography, films and television the children of the West are directed away from the creative impulse and the making of images.

Vital problems for me arise in the studio or work-shop. These problems have to do with my relations with nature and with God, with history, and the materials I have to work with. I always ask the questions: "Who am I? What am I? What is it? What is out there?" This prompted the troubadour Martin Best to call me "Mr. What-Is-It." The question always remains: "What is out there and what is it, in us, that relates to it?" What is the inner feeling (the inner-light of Quakerism), Cezanne's 'little sensation,' the sense of design that not only motivates the artist but provides the structure for the idea?

The problems which arise in painting have no existence apart from the materials that give them substance but these problems cannot be dismissed as being merely technical ones. Reality, the facts, are the material out of which the artist creates. As the philosopher Karl Britten said: "A fact is essentially abstract but there." The act of creation is always an act of the human will. Material without intention and direction can never be art. A painting has a logical structure. The difficulty arises in the contradiction during working, where the need is to exercise some kind of logical control during the period of gestation of an idea, which comes into existence beyond the ordinary norms of logic. To completely abandon oneself to paint, to texture, or to the sensuality of the brush, is dangerous and cannot result in a meaningful image. Paint as paint has no meaning - form as form has no meaning - colour as colour has no meaning.

I propose to deal once again with Question 2.2: How far have you fulfilled Bomberg's ideas and how have you developed them? Of course, it is impossible to know how far I have fulfilled Bomberg's ideas because, first of all, it was almost impossible to know what Bomberg's

ideas were. At best, one has an interpretation but the interpretation was merely a stimulus to the development of one's own ideas. In any case, the idea itself - that is to say the idea in the head - whether it is that of the master or the student, is never brought to fruition, can never be visualized or translated into a form on canvas. The idea in the head acts only as a stimulus to the innate design sense of the artist.

Both Bomberg and I were figurative painters but I became much more committed to the figures. I have painted several hundred and there are no close connections with other painters other than with my colleagues in the Borough Group. I cannot offer any proof that I have fulfilled any of Bomberg's ideas, but I feel strongly that the development of the Borough Group made a significant contribution in drawing and painting (especially in drawings and paintings of the figure, which I have continued to develop ever since the breakup of the group). One cannot say that it was better or worse, but one can say that it was different and explored new ground, in the way the Cubists did. As I have pointed out in another connection, Bomberg himself, in the last four years of his life, changed his drawing significantly towards the way the Borough Group was oriented in their drawing practice. I can only think of three paintings by Bomberg that were painted from the model. By comparison, I have made many compositions with single figures and with two figures. I have also made many paintings with figures sitting on chairs, which at one point I thought was rather ridiculous. The only other work of this sort which I can think of - and I was doing it much earlier - was Henry Moore's 'King and Queen,' but I found a literary justification some years later when I saw the play by Ionesco, 'The Chairs.' And then on a visit to Crete, in the Herakleion Museum, I found small sculptures which were surprisingly similar to figures and forms that I had painted in the forties and early fifties.

If I was asked "what is art?" I would say that art is rather similar to religion or to some aspects of philosophy in that it deals with the spirit. But, in art, form comes into existence through idea and has no separate existence without idea. I think it was Susan Langer who said something like this: "Art is the creation of forms symbolic of human feeling." But to dwell on one's state of mind in front of a work of art does not further one's understanding of the work or its value.

The big difference between so-called 'fine art' and handicraft or design is that the products of the latter can be compared one with another and judged to be better or worse - in their production there is a certain amount of competition and so the product of handicraft or design can be said to be 'good of its kind.' Of course, this attitude has strayed into art criticism where art historians and critics have placed paintings into categories and they say this is 'good of its kind,' or this is 'good in that style.' But as W. H. Auden once said: "A work of art is not good of a certain kind but a unique good so that, strictly speaking, no work of art is comparable to another." Auden goes on to suggest that, in the case of a washing machine, an inferior one is better than no washing machine at all, but a work of art must be either accepted with whatever faults it might contain or it is unacceptable, even if it has merit.

Competition in art is ridiculous because it is impossible to paint an absolute masterpiece. One cannot strive for perfection (whatever that might be or whatever it could mean). I think it was Sylvia Plath who said: "Perfection has no babies." The early Greeks strove for harmony which only resulted in a decadence. This kind of striving is totally unreal; the creative powers cannot relate to it and the result must be total sterility. On the question of originality and uniqueness of image, Auden has this to say: "Originality no longer means slight modification in the style of one's immediate predecessors; it means a capacity to find in any work of any date or place a clue to finding one's authentic voice."

On the question of the finished work of art, Auden had a similar attitude to poetry as I have to painting. To quote Auden: "If, on finishing a poem he is convinced that it is good, the chances are that the poem is a self-imitation. The most hopeful sign that it is not is the feeling of complete uncertainty either this is quite good or it is quite bad I can't tell." At this point I cannot resist quoting Auden once again: "Some writers confuse authenticity, which they ought always to aim at, with originality, which they should never bother about. There is a certain kind of person who is so dominated by the desire to be loved for himself alone that he has constantly to test those around him by his tiresome behaviour, what he says and does must be admired, not because it is intrinsically admirable, but because it is his remark, his act. Does this not explain a good deal of avant-garde art?"

Of course critics lacking any concept of the creative act (or even why a thing is creative) have contributed to this mess with their attitude towards what is 'good of its kind,' or 'good in this style, in this manner.' One is reminded of the characters in 'Waiting for Godot' who cry "moron, vermin, abortion, morpheme, sewer rat, curate, cretin, critic," and with these terms Vladimir and Estragon exchange abuse in a slanging match whilst waiting for Godot. The 'coup de grace' is the accusation of being a critic; it is worse than all that preceded it. And of course, the chief reason why artists suspect critics is that they have arbitrary power which they use irresponsibly. They never ask why and with what justification works of art exist. They only describe how they exist. The revolutionary discoveries in art have been wrenched from their context and turned into novelties of fashion; novelties that serve fashion.

Question 2.6: Have my tastes and preferences in art changed over the years? I hesitate about the word 'taste'; that has to do with fashion and not with art. I always tell my students that I have no taste. We are not in the business of taste. We make taste for other people, for our public, but even with the public it has more to do with design and decoration and not with 'art proper.' A matter of taste is more in line with a matter of opinion and, again, in art we are not dealing with either taste or opinions but with ideas. I have never been able to understand why taste is always connected with the arts, whether it be painting, sculpture, architecture, music, or theatre, but one is never asked about one's taste in religion or science. As Wittgenstein pointed out, "taste doesn't do anything."

When it comes to preferences, of course, that is a different matter, because then we can talk about a preference for one set of ideas against another set of ideas and, for me, this is one of the mysteries. Why do we prefer one idea and not another idea? Why do we think one idea is charged with meaning and another idea is totally irrelevant? Why is one idea exciting and the other boring? I haven't a clue as to what determines this. I have no idea what prompted me to choose one master against all other artists and against all other schools and institutions and why this choice proved to be so absolutely right for me. And, no, my preferences have not changed over the years, only my capacity for understanding has developed and of course this is precisely what Bomberg taught and this is what I try to teach.

One of the reasons why we hated the Futurists was that they denied history. They denied tradition and, while I am on this point, we can say that one of the reasons why we disliked Cubism was because it was so impersonal; and Vorticism, because it was grounded in a literary idea. The artist and the art historian, when looking at the history of art, should regard it in quite another way than as the recording of facts. The artist and the historian should both act as inquirers into the meaning of historical continuity. They should seek not only to record what happens or how it happened, but also they should judge why it happened. The emphasis should always be on judgment and value.

Now let us turn to Question 2.4: What arts apart from painting have given you inspiration? I am a little confused by the word 'inspiration.' According to my dictionary, it means either drawing in of breath or being divinely inspired or divine influence or a sudden happy idea. Well, none of these apply to me but there have been moments when I have been animated or revitalized or prompted to action after having been to the theatre or the ballet or looking at a film. But my biggest boost to activity comes not really from the arts but rather from philosophy. This is not only a boost to start activity but also it is a justification for what one has done. Many ideas run parallel.

A very stimulating period was during the time when I had an association with Noa Eshkol who was the daughter of the Prime Minister of Israel, Levi Eshkol, and was at that time known by her original name, which was Skolnick (Eshkol being the Hebrew version of Skolnick). She and I were working on parallel problems of movement. She was working with dance and I was working with paint. Eventually she wrote a book of dance notation. This had been tried before but her system of notation was the best and it was used by the Americans to find out what the men would do when they landed on the moon. And so, while she was busy doing an apparently useless activity like dance (without decor, costume or music and with only the aid of a metronome) her father despaired for the future of his daughter, but eventually she became a scientific celebrity.

However, although I am not directly inspired or influenced by any other art form, nevertheless I firmly believe that every artist must have an all round experience and understanding of the other arts in order to be able to perform well in his chosen medium. I look at sculpture and architecture, although of course there is very little architecture about. But even a conglomeration - a mess - of buildings over an industrial landscape can be just as exciting as St. Paul's Cathedral or a nude. However it should be remembered that the kind of excitement generated by the first impact or impulse in front of any of the arts or nature only triggers the activity and it is not the same kind of excitement as the inner excitement which is generated during the creative act.

In Question 2.5 it is suggested that I might view nature as a dictionary as it was for Delacroix. No, it is not a dictionary, simply because a dictionary deals with known and fixed values, signs and symbols and so forth, so that one is in the world of translation and interpretation and even imitation. I think it was Picasso who said: "I do not seek, I find." Well, I don't find but I search, and the kind of search has some parallels not only with philosophy but with science also. The Danish physicist, Niels Bohr, claimed that science tells us nothing about the world as it is in itself and can only tell us about the way we interact with the world. In reference to light he explained that some experiments point to light being a wave while others point to it being made of particles. But the concepts of wave and particle do not apply to objects themselves but only to the way we interact with them. Similarly, a fourteenth century archbishop, Gregory Palamas, decided that God is absolutely unknowable in His essence, that is to say, as He is in Himself. Instead He should be regarded as knowable only through His energies so that in both physics and theology, whether we are dealing with God or light or material objects, we can only speak of one's interactions with those objects. We are always asking the question what is it out there and, again, who and what am I?

If the natural world was a dictionary, that would be like interposing a grid before nature. When we work with art we cannot accept any theory of nature in exchange for nature itself. So, far from desiring to isolate it in a formula appealing to the intellect, on the contrary we seek to materialize it in a form that gives joy to the soul through the senses. We want to create something that is parallel with nature and not simply to define nature. The definition should

follow the work; the work should not adapt itself to the definition. It is in our interaction with nature through activity that the idea of nature comes about; the idea being, of course, the work of art.

Question 2.7: The action of painting has a particular meaning for you. What is it? Well, there is action and there is stillness. A painting comes about through action but it is finalized in one moment of time, that is, in stillness. I do not mean here the kind of action that is necessary and facilitates the business of everyday living and I am not speaking of action for the sake of knowledge but, rather, action for the sake of definition. This is the kind of action which uses all the body and all the senses, which is rather similar to the action used and advocated by the masters of Zen and this kind of action or activity is very different to, and almost opposite to, that postulated by Jackson Pollock with his throwing action of paint. I think this gut attitude of throwing by Pollock was an illusion. I think that it stemmed more from the intellect and was a controlled activity. The Tachist paintings of Sam Francis were so divorced from real or virtual space that his compositions degenerated into a pattern; a sort of carpet design. An artist like Richard Long, on the other hand, was concerned more with the actual manipulation of space by placing objects (stones etc.) in a situation. I reject all these attitudes.

Painting is a physical activity - like dance. It is physical because the mere appearance of things (and their intellectual attributes) follow only after apprehension by all the other senses. Sight merely corroborates the data and the intellect evaluates, classifies and gives it a name. Every painting is related. It is either a continuation or a reaction against the point of so-called completion of the last one. There is no such thing as completion. It is like an orgasm. If you stop the activity too soon it is unsatisfying but if you go over the point it is also unsatisfying. If you finish too soon the idea is incomplete but if you go over the point then you are already creating another idea. Therefore one must take another canvas otherwise your original idea is canceled out, resulting in confusion.

Development is the life of painting. That is what it is all about - the search and the development of ideas. One canvas leads to the next; one image leads to another. But I do not mean a sequence or a series as in the Monet Haystacks where the intention was to record a situation of light in one moment of time. We tend to work in the way Monet worked after 1890 when he had rejected Impressionism. We feel in a time sequence, a continuous battle with the elements, which ends in a frozen stillness in one moment of time. One idea can be superimposed on another before the first is finally determined. The difficulty and the main problem, which hinges on the undeveloped critical faculty, is to know when to stop. As I have previously indicated, the critical faculty lags far behind one's creative potential. It is not good to seek simplicity because this can lead to emptiness, just as complexity can lead to obscurity. The problem is to isolate each idea and give it a life of its own. Only the old painters can do this with ease. But there is no finality to any form ultimately.

Painting is a kind of game, like chess. The game takes place within the four sides of a canvas, this being the limitation (as is the flat surface) so that we can treat the canvas (or any other form of support) as an area in which an activity takes place, an area in which an event occurs, and the event comes about through an activity which is physical. We are using all the senses plus movement. When we look at something the act of looking involves judgment - that is to say looking is a form of judgment as against seeing (which does not involve a decision or a judgment) so that, in this sense, action ought to be understood as the constructive expression of judgment. We could say that seeing is what we do as a practical means of moving around without bumping into anything. Seeing does not involve judgment because it merely allows us to designate something as being there, in our immediate vicinity, and this something is given a

name and deemed to possess other qualities, which we attach to it by convention, custom and habit. When we look at an object, however, we divest it of its name, its attributes and its function and we are back to the question: "What is it?"

Bomberg once wrote that the artist should be absolutely and completely blind. I think it is a very interesting question, which nobody seems to ask, why it was that Monet, in the last 25 years of his life when he was partially blind, created what was, in my view, his most authentic and original work. This work came about as a reaction against his earlier work and that of his colleagues and against all the original theories of Impressionism. He was no longer interested in an impression in one moment of time. Instead he constructed with marks and colours, working more in a physical way rather than in a visual way. The question remains as to whether he was forced into this direction by the onset of blindness or whether it was his actual decision to reject his previous theories, or whether both ideas ran parallel and were coincidental?

Of course, it must be understood that, when dealing with movement, we are concerned all the time with virtual movement even though we observe real movement and we ourselves move. When it comes to touch, we are dealing with virtual touch. We are not caressing or stroking the model. That is why we can think in terms - and must think in terms - of other objects. Instead of flesh, we think of rocks or buttresses and everything can always be something else, although in the end each form has a special character. The Cubists understood this approach, where everything was open to being treated as if it were something else. This was one of the reasons why the Cubists used to turn their pictures upside down and continue to paint because they realized that, looking at the form which they had just created, if it appeared banal then that banality might be stemming from their sense of gravity. But they realized, as we do, that it was the forms and the marks themselves which contained the vitality and that they might be divorced altogether from the subject. A painting could be turned upside down so that although the subject disappeared, the vitality and the movement of the forms remained. The marks could then be manipulated into another subject. As that famous quotation from the little girl goes: "How can I know what I think till I see what I say?" This reminds me of something that Francis Bacon once said in connection with illustration painting. He wondered why painting is more poignant than illustration and he supposed it was because it had a life completely of its own.

Touch is all important. Touch starts the moment we are born. We are handled, slapped, caressed, held and protected. Then we seek the breast. First, perhaps, by the sense of smell; then by touch, through the mouth. Then we begin to move around. Movement is an essential ingredient in our comprehension of reality. We begin to feel space and distance. We do not see distance and we have no concept of space. But we begin to act. We begin to move, touch, and feel. But activity is soon diverted into tactics for survival and, in everyday life, movement degenerates into measure. Measure comes about through movement and by measure we acquire a knowledge of distance.

Before it has begun to move around and to find a space between objects, a baby will reach out to touch the moon, that disk in the sky that changes colour and size. At this early stage in its development, the baby cannot distinguish the moon from the light of a lamp which is only a metre away from it. As the baby develops it will begin to see objects, but without understanding. Bergson has defined the function of the intellect as a means of presenting things not so that we may most thoroughly understand them but so that we may successfully act on them. Everything in man is dominated by the necessity for action. Soon things are given a name and we begin to acquire knowledge. Then the name becomes the thing and as Ernst Cassirer points out: "The conscious experience is not merely wedded to the word, but is consumed by it."

Whatever has been fixed by a name, henceforth is not only real but is Reality." Later he observes that "all symbolism harbours the curse of mediacy; it is bound to obscure what it seeks to reveal." Thus, as T. E. Hume has said: "Most of us never see things as they are, but see only the stock types which are embodied in language."

It is not enough for the artist to try to represent what he sees or to attempt to convey the emotions that he feels. Wittgenstein has said that he can think that he understands a poem in the way that the author would have wished him to, "but what he may have felt in writing it doesn't concern me at all." In any case it is impossible to paint an emotion. An emotion is the by-product of the experience during the act of painting. The artist must be able to emancipate himself from the moulds imposed by language and by ordinary perception. He must not only experience things freshly, but must escape the lie of the eye and allow all the senses to operate in order to find out what it is out there. And, of all the senses, the sense of touch is the most important. But I do not mean that you have to actually handle things any more than Berenson's reference to his tactile sense meant the caressing of the picture surface. We cannot see distance. We know distance. That is to say, we make a wilful judgment based on experience, measure and knowledge. The smudge in the distance which we know to be a large object is not the same as the object observed in close proximity. It is a different object we sense even though we know intellectually that it is the same object. The silhouette of the mountain changes constantly as we approach until finally we are confronted with a heap of stones not unlike those observed on the flat land. Note Cezanne's treatment of Mont Saint Victoire and the relationship of vegetation, mountain and clouds. Similarly our concept of a cathedral entails not only viewing from a distance but a close-up which again reduces the cathedral to a collection of stones. The camera eye produces its own peculiar distortions. The painter is confronted with the problem of not only welding together four or five optical perspectives but must also attempt an evaluation through all the many different perspectives, namely, optical, mathematical, geometric, and even the inverted perspectives of Uccello. These devices served their purpose at the time of invention but are inadequate as a measure of reality today.

If you place your hand flat on a piece of white paper (or you can do the same thing with a leaf) and draw around the contours the kind of drawing that you have does not approximate to either the hand or a leaf in reality. It is only a simple sign or symbol of a hand or a leaf because you have not been dealing with the solidity of the object, the space it displaces or the relation of this one object to any other object. Neither, in making a drawing like this, have you dealt with the movement of the object or the light that flies around and over the object. But when we consider all the leaves on a tree, although they are similar in kind, each one has a slightly different character and each leaf moves and the light moves over all the leaves and, furthermore, you, as an artist, are also moving. So every leaf form is different in character and in form and, if we try to deal with these ingredients of reality, there are endless permutations of the form. If one draws a line around the hand or round a leaf it gives no idea of hand or leaf because the outline does not concern itself with movement or volume or light. Theophile Gautier wrote, after a conversation with Delacroix, that the outline defines the form arbitrarily - it undoes the effect of it by destroying the mass. In reality "one draws by means of the middle of things as much as by their edges," and "those painters who are called Colourists have a tendency to bring out the relief of things, and the draughtsmen to produce the silhouette." It is for this reason that Cezanne used so many small brush strokes instead of a line as he was unable, or rather he recognized that it was impossible, to find the edge of things. Delacroix had already recognized that painting must no longer be an addition of parts, but a single whole. He keeps his eye away

from the temptation to analyze, and tries to create a complete spell in which the sensibility, as though hypnotized, will let itself be dominated by a "silent power" that "seizes all the faculties of the soul."

Roy Oxlade has criticized me for talking about the creative act being nurtured by a kind of drunken state. Obviously I do not mean that one can paint while drunk as a result of drinking alcohol, but one strives to allow oneself to achieve a similar state of ecstasy, a poetic frenzy. I am supported in this view by many poets and painters from the past. Baudelaire for example said that "... it is essential to be always intoxicated. Everything lies in that. It is the one and only thing" - meaning that one must go to the utmost limits of oneself. He also talked about the complete man keeping the gift of childhood which enables him to experience things intensely so that he "sees everything as new ... is always drunk." The complete man remains in touch with the gifts of inspiration and yet he is able to add to these the virtues of maturity. Delacroix wrote in his journals "one has to be beside oneself, out of one's senses, in order to be what one can be!" so that the artist becomes "clear, lucid and penetrates to the depths unknown to others." One must risk everything - "one's entire being" - to go beyond the point of "inventing cautiously and copying slavishly." Bomberg often spoke about working while suffering from a fever and my own experience of working while under acute depression or anger is always positive, not, I think, because one sublimates the anger or the depression, but because these moods, like a fever, deflect the critical faculty which then gives the Muse a chance.

In a given set of forms, for example in the human figure, a change of related directions is the only factor which differentiates one form from another and gives each its peculiar character when divested of descriptive and anecdotal detail. Direction means movement. Movement normally means the volition or locomotion of an object in relation to other objects. In terms of drawing (that is in terms of art) the meaningful image comes about when movement is used in a sense peculiar to static form - this is the movement that lies within and around the object, which is virtual movement. It is at this point that Bomberg's attitude and mine differ from the Cubists who were only interested in the actual movement of man in front of the object. Directional lines were thrown out and at the point of intersection a plane emerged which defined the form but the illusion remained just as optical as if it was discursive form. What interested us was the throwing out of innumerable directional lines, virtual lines, which through movement defined the space and form.

Giving the directional lines precedence over descriptive form resulted in a very vigorous but primitive image, the forms of which had been found as if by accident, and these forms are related to nature only as a set of tensions. That is to say, the entity embraced between the directional lines is not necessarily true to the apparent optical truth in nature. But, as the concern is no longer with the illusionistic rendering of truth, such anomalies can be dismissed and it is found that there are no laws governing the relation of the entities or the selection of a direction, as long as the activity aspires to the vital image. It is also possible that the entities may not be so important in themselves - the colours that fill the entities may only serve to hold the directional lines apart. But then the lines themselves are also of colour. If we think in terms of equal shapes, equal sizes, filled with different colours that give rise to an illusion of different sizes and with every shape changing the character and intensity of the colour, then the permutations and possibilities are endless. That is why we stress drawing and building with colour. Every stroke of paint, every mark, every line gives direction - direction gives tension, and the tension gives movement - the movement gives volume, and in the volume we find mass - and it is in the unique character of mass that we find meaning.

A painting has to have a logical structure. The difficulty arises in the contradictions while working, where the need is to exercise some kind of logical control during the period of gestation of an idea. For many non-figurative painters like Mondrian the use of numbers and geometry seem to offer this control and so they would make measurements of mathematically determined areas of the painted surface. But this is merely the same kind of control that the model offers the representational painter or that the literary anecdote offers the illustrator. Although these approaches seem to offer some kind of logical control, this is the control of known named facts. That is why the work of the Concretists or Hard-edge painters have the appearance of Impressionism or carpentry. It is almost impossible to synthesize the rational and the intuitive.

As Patrick Heron once said, merely to observe is to subscribe to the heresy of realism and merely to project a rhythm is to subscribe to the heresy of non-figuration. I also reject both ideas in favour of regarding painting as a physical passion. It must be a passion because of the unceasing dedication and commitment required. It is physical because the mere appearance of things and their intellectual attributes follow only after apprehension by all the senses. Sight merely corroborates the data and the intellect evaluates, classifies, and gives it a name. The primary illusion of virtual space comes at the first stroke of the brush. This concentrates the mind entirely on the picture plane and neutralizes the actual limits of vision. With increased maturity the artist is faced with a greater complexity of directions, entities, movements and it is by resolving these tensions and contradictions and by aspiring towards a unity and an unattainable harmony that the unique character of the mass is found.

While I have been stressing the importance of structure, I do not mean to suggest that colour does not play an important role. The force of the colour can destroy the form. It can re-route the direction of the lines. But the colour remains which the lines can hold and vice versa. Both the colour and the line hold together only in relation to the whole. The obvious geometric structure of the later work of Mondrian (and the equally obvious naturalism of the overall shape in his earlier work) belies and contradicts and even destroys the volumes. The interiors of the naturalistic shapes contain a volume which, in the later work, appears to be amplified but it is as though only a selection of a few elements had been put under a microscope. Thus his interest lies more in the parts than the whole.

On Colour - What are its characteristics? To a blind man colour does not exist. But he lives in a real world of things, of objects in space and time. The blind man uses all his senses except sight for his sense of reality. He feels objects and space without recognizing them by their colour. It follows that the fundamental activity in painting is not the manipulation of colour but drawing ... the making of marks. Colour changes according to the situation, according to the light or the mood of the viewer or the way it is used.

Apropos of this I am reminded of a book by John Berger written in 1958 called *A Painter of Our Time*. This book was drawn from Berger's observation of Bomberg and the artists in the Borough Group but mainly it was based on the life of the sculptor Peter Peri. I lent the book to Torsten Bergmark, Torsten Renquist and Olle Carlstrom. When it was returned there were several marked passages, including this one which I will quote: "I see what you are getting at. I was thinking the other day. How a blind man doesn't lack a sense of reality, you know? And that is the kind of reality, if you see what I mean, that I want to get into the paintings." In the margin was the word "Cliff" in Renquist's hand-writing.

Paint, form and colour have to be manipulated if they are to have meaning. We can dismiss Goethe's theory of colour where colour is given an agreed value and becomes a symbol for something else. I am against the pseudo-religious-scientific colour theories of Rudolph

Steiner which are based on the colour theories of Goethe. I have always regarded them not only as being limiting but also as false. Although I will admit that, when the colour theories of Steiner were applied to the interior decoration of the village of Jarne in Sweden, the result was very professional.

It is significant that black and white are not regarded as colours by most people. Drawing is making black marks on a white ground or white marks on a black ground. Painting is drawing with all the other colours. Colours react to each other. Colours change the size of shapes. Through the manipulation of colour, paint can make form and it is through the form that an idea can evolve when it is imbued and fully pregnant with meaning.

Van Gogh has said that colour in itself expresses nothing. Colour is meaningless. Even symbolic colour is dependent on the time, place and situation. White is for mourning in China, but in the West black is for mourning. There is no black in nature and there is no colour black. There are only gradations from light to dark. In order to make an approximation of the colour we call black it is better to mix ultramarine with alizarin-crimson than use a standard colour out of the tube. If you hold a piece of white paper against a blue sky the sky may, under certain conditions, appear lighter than the paper or, according to the light, it may appear black.

Van Gogh once described himself as an arbitrary colourist when, in painting a portrait, he exaggerated the fairness of the hair with orange tones, chromes and pale lemon yellows against a bluest of blue backgrounds instead of the ordinary dull wall surface - and he comments that the nice people will only see the exaggeration as caricature. Colour as caricature! What is important is to draw with colour. The application can be ambiguous, random, working with and exploiting the hazard but, all the time, building and drawing so that the marks build both space and form. Cezanne has said that the more harmonious the colour the more precise is the drawing. I prefer to put it the other way round - the more you draw the richer the colour. That is to say that the colours are right for the form that has been created. The colour fits the form like a glove on the hand.

Then we come to an even more complicating factor because (and I think it was Braque who said something similar to this) every form can always be something else. Of course that is why, in his painting of 'The Sleeping Men,' Bomberg did not work from models but from an arrangement of pillows. This should be borne in mind when we paint an object - if we paint rocks, for example, it is always a good idea to think in terms of a nude model or, if we look at the nude model, we can think in terms of rocks or forests or even the sort of buttresses in a cathedral which build up the structure and support the form like a scaffold. Then, when we have this kind of engagement with our subject, in the drawing, we might throw out a lot of imaginary lines in order to get an estimation of the space between, around and within the forms. It was these kinds of lines which the Cubists threw out, so that where they intersected they formed a cube - hence, the name Cubism. I am inclined to reject their methods as being too limited in scope and prefer a greater variety of virtual lines, some of which are left as a kind of scaffold because without them the form would collapse. Then there is an interchange of lines which could be seen as indicating either space or form. And, of course, on the question of subject and that awkward word 'beauty,' they are both very small ingredients in what gives a painting its meaning. If Cezanne had been concerned with painting an apple because it was a beautiful apple then it would have been of no interest to us (and it would still not have been interesting even if he had painted apples which were ten times more beautiful). It is why he painted the apple and how it was painted that is of interest. That is to say, our interest is in what he found out about himself when he painted the apple. It is not what a man does but what a man is that is important.

Roger Fry was right when he once said that the artist is generally trying very hard to do something which has nothing to do with what he actually accomplishes. The fundamental quality of his work seems to come out unconsciously, as a by-product of his conscious activity. This explains why the Impressionists were able to produce very fine paintings despite having based them on erroneous theories of light and colour. These theories were totally false but, nevertheless, they were a stimulus for the works produced.

Some 35 years ago, I coined the phrase 'the planned accident.' I meant that planning alone will not stimulate or contribute to the creative act or create anything. One must be activated but activity alone will not create either. Sheer activity alone will not make art and too much planning will stifle the creative act. The painter has a curious duality which swings between the speculative man and the man of action. Painting is both emotive and empirical. One cannot think a painting - it is a planned accident. The Tachists and the Action Painters were right in this respect. But action is only a means to an unknown end. The direction might change and, if one cares to think about it, one can see that the direction must change. For if we know where we are going and what we will find when we get there, then there is no point in going there. Thus, the action of painting is similar to the action of walking for the explorer - it is something he must do and, for much of the way he might recognize and enjoy the landscape or he might struggle along paths which he has walked before, but neither the enjoyment nor the struggle nor the reassertion of a known route, constitute the purpose of his journey.

I often make a parallel between the creative act and the sexual act. As an idea in the head, sex is totally different to the reality of sex and the sexual activity itself bears no relation to the end product which is, so to speak, a baby. Before it is born you can never visualize what the baby will look like. So there are three stages; the fantasy of sex which is the imaginative idea in the head, then the activity itself which is a form of expression and communication, and then lastly the possible end product, the baby. Often the first sight of the baby comes as something of a shock. It is not exactly beautiful but, through the process of understanding, one comes to love, and this is exactly the same with the painted image. You cannot recognize the image if it is truly created. It comes as a shock and it is only long afterwards, as your critique has developed through experience, that you can look back and make an assessment. It is only then, through understanding, that you have the possibility of recognizing the authentic image that you have created. Only then is the idea brought to consciousness. This is, of course, why painting is so difficult. If you do recognize the image straight-away, you can be sure that you are imitating yourself or somebody else because you know what it is and it does not come as a surprise or a shock. Therefore it is in the development of critique where the master, with his greater experience, can help the student.

Everything we touch or know could always be something else. That is why symbols have no validity except for direct communication. The appearance of things can never be the reality. The contradictions and a duality between sight and touch results in an intensification of a sense of reality. Sight and knowledge are more general. Through touch we establish distance and movement. In movement we establish space and form. The battle between sight and touch to establish distance and movement results in a different conceptual reality. Here we find mass. However the concern is not with a generalized mass but with a particular character. It takes many years before the particular is assimilated into the stream of life and contributes, along with signs and symbols, to the general well-being in our cultural environment. A concern with mass through movement, design and structure reveals the unique character of mass.

The forms articulate. They are essentially non-discursive. Any anecdote of detail remains detail and destroys mass. In the act of painting there are actual movements in terms of the brush which give rise to virtual movement. Counter movements are necessary and they produce tension. Often the movements and tensions are contrary to the brush or tool. The tool brings them into existence. It establishes fact.

Teaching and Practice

In spite of my conviction that there is very little to teach in art, I have always been ready to assist those individuals who needed help because they were genuinely struggling to realize their potential as practicing artists. This has led to me having a role as a teacher and mentor.

During the years in which Lisa and I were based in Marstrand (1959-1984) we kept an open studio to receive a large number of different people ranging from committed students to amateurs who painted for pleasure. An educational organization called Medborgarskolan arranged for groups to come and attend weekly classes with us under the auspices of the Swedish Conservative party. I felt obliged to take on this duty because I was the only artist on the island. Several times a year we also received a group of young people, aged between 13 and 14, who were sent to us by the local education authority to experience life in a working studio.

In 1969 we organized an event for 130 people from K.I.F. (Foreningen Sveriges Konsthantverkare och Industriformgivare, the National Design Organization). This was a whole day of being shown around the island, with lectures and discussions, and ending with a dinner, speeches and a dance. We transported them all out to the island by boat from Gothenburg and we welcomed them with a gun salute and then, as a send off, there was a firework display. In the same year we gave lectures and demonstrations to various other organizations, for example, to 110 people from Frederika Bremerförbundet (a Women's Organization), to 50 people from Billströmska Folkhögskolan (a High School on the island of Tjörn) and to another group of 50 people from an organization called Kvinnliga Bilkaren.

On top of these events we also had over a dozen students staying with us at different times during that year; some staying for a week or two and some who stayed for several months. In each case we gave our time and materials freely and, although this did not generate any income, we felt that this was a service which we could provide for the community in the interests of art.

I have a list of all the visitors, students and assistants who we had staying with us during 1969 because our business was assessed by the Audit Court of Gothenburg and I was required to provide documentation of our income and expenditure. I was interviewed twice by Olle Möller, a lecturer and consultant in Economics who was assigned to our case (case no. 2429-1975) and the audit report which he submitted (15th October, 1976) is worth quoting because it shows what an absurd position we were in when dealing with the tax authorities. (Lisa was the plaintiff in the case and I was representing her.)

General Opinion. The plaintiff's representative, Cliff Holden, who is the driving force in the business and who has been responsible for the business transactions, gives the impression of being a "typical artist" who is overwhelmingly engaged in his art but almost a complete stranger to figures, keeping accounts and preserving all the papers (bills, receipts, etc.) required by law for taxation purposes. My definite impression is that here we have a business which is quite considerable but which is not at all profitable. In fact, some years were probably running at a loss. Accurate assessment has been clouded by the fact that it is difficult to draw the line between their business and the underlying accounts which were presented. The plaintiff's position is severely undermined by bookkeeping inadequacy, in certain cases vouchers, receipts, etc., are entirely missing. Since there is not

enough documentation upon which to make a real assessment, a rough assessment must be made instead and this will naturally place, and rightly so, the person liable for taxation in an unfavourable position vis-à-vis the taxation authorities. This is obviously what has happened in this case, since one normally assumes that a business is run on economic principles.

A heavy turnover with little profit always appears suspicious and unlikely in a society where there is freedom of choice and where well-paid jobs may appear to be within reach. However, one should not disregard personal qualifications, education, etc., which in individual cases can limit freedom of choice to a great extent. Quite probably where you have artists engaged in the business of creating art, economics of that business can be pushed greatly into the background, ignored and perhaps even despised. So when an artist meets someone who is familiar with and normally engages in businesses where finance, expenditure-income-profitability naturally dominate, it is quite easy for them to speak two different languages and not understand each other. This can lead to drawn-out correspondence, lengthy meetings which do not lead anywhere, many people involved and in the end the original status quo. Everything points to the fact that the economic situation of the plaintiff is weak, she is heavily burdened with debt and in no way can be regarded as a "taxable object."

In 1984 we left the island of Marstrand and moved to a house in the village of Hasslas near Falkenberg. Although we were still being chased by the State Bailiffs, thanks to 'The Cliff Holden Foundation,' I was able to buy a house of my own, for the first time in my life. The house had previously been a school building and it now became known as the Hazelridge School of Painting (Hasslas Malar Skola). It has provided us with enough space to continue our studio practice as well as to continue to accommodate students.

What I have always found in my relationships with students, apprentices or assistants, is that they are so involved with their own egos and they want to project that ego onto me. More often than not they are completely lacking in humility. With many of them there is no apparent reason why they should come to me except to add another notch to their belt, learn a few tricks and steal a few half-understood ideas which they will later bastardize. They do not understand that understanding requires that they have the humility to accept what I teach and that what I teach is beyond their knowledge or taste. I try to teach an approach to painting which points the way towards something they do not know and may not even like, for we are not in the business of making pronouncements of what we like and what we dislike. It is nonsense for the student to think in terms of good art being the art that he likes for, as Oscar Wilde pointed out, there is no such thing as good art and bad art - there is only art.

A great deal of time is wasted in fruitless arguments with students. Students always argue. They are sceptical but they never doubt; they are too sure of their opinions which leave no room for doubt. They hold to the doctrine that there is no truth, that everything is a matter of opinion. This means, of course, that they have no value judgment. I always tell them I am not interested in their opinions and they shouldn't be interested in my opinion. We do not deal in opinions in art; we search for truth. Together we should ask: "Is it right or wrong? Is it true or false? Does it function or not? Is it art or not art?"

What I mean is that, in art, we are searching after an idea and we must find out if the idea is approximating to the truth or whether it is false. By contrast, in design and decoration there is no idea other than what it is. Therefore it is not a question of being true or false; it is either right or wrong. It needs to function and if it does not function in the situation it is intended for then it is no use whatever. I have had to constantly point out that opinions and tastes are for the

consumer - the big wide public - the public that knows what they like, and like what they know. I also implore the student not to get bored. They should work with passion.

In an attempt to clarify the relationship and smooth the path in the activity and relationship between master and student, I formulated a few rules which went something like this: "You are free to do as you like as long as you do as I say. You live and work as we do. There will be no arguments and no expression of opinions unless specifically asked for. I require absolute honesty with me and especially with yourself. If any problems arise please discuss. Do not argue. I am not interested in arguments; arguments solve nothing. The problem to be solved should take place on the canvas. The sole purpose of you being here is to learn from me. When the point is reached when you no longer learn but seek to indoctrinate me with your opinions, then it is time to part. If we understand each other, that point will never be reached; you will continue the work that I have not had time enough to accomplish in my lifetime."

Many years ago, I was contacted by the son of a very dear friend who was studying to be an architect, and he came to me as a student but he only lasted two days. We quarrelled constantly and, when I talked about this question of not being interested in his opinions, he was absolutely furious. Of course, I was very sad and I thought that perhaps my attitude had been too negative. But some twenty-five years later he came back to me and thanked me for this most traumatic experience of his life. He said it was the best lesson that he had had, which apparently had helped him enormously in his later studies.

In order to dissuade students from having too many illusions about what lies ahead if they choose a career in art, I have often quoted the following passage from *The Werewolf* by the Danish-born writer, Axel Sandemose:

I can well understand parents who get worked up when a son or daughter wants to take up art. For almost one hundred per cent of those who do go to hell, and so parents keep urging the youth to realize that painting and such things can be pleasant to fool around with in the evening. Only vaguely do parents understand what is so terrible, namely that one who goes in for art places all on one card, and has only one. They see the son or the daughter as having chosen a road that rarely leads to anything but ruin, and they feel the youth should choose another road, without understanding that there is no other road and no choice.

And so I have only one reply to every youth who asks if I think he ought to continue, it is not a question of what one thinks, if you actually can stop, then you only amount to something less than third class, and you must stop immediately. But even if you cannot stop, this is no guarantee of your success.

A few years ago I came across a book by a German philosopher Eugene Herrigel, who was teaching philosophy in Japan. His book was called *Zen in the Art of Archery* and I was astonished to find that the Zen master taught in an almost identical way to myself. What all this amounts to, in fact, is that there is nothing to teach except to point a direction, to activate the student, and to cultivate their critical faculty.

In order to capture some part of what happens in the course of a working relationship with a student, during the summer of 1993, I recorded daily sessions with one particular student called Steven Haigh. He had studied Illustration and Graphic Design at Norwich Art School and then Fine Art at the Royal Academy. With a background of this kind, he was well versed in

doing art in a way which I have never considered to be art at all and he had been nurtured by an academic training which I have always hated. By way of reviewing many of the arguments which I have presented in this book I include a transcript of some of our sessions together.

You are making rhythms and movements. You are picking up suggestions from the landscape and clouds but, when it comes to this silhouette of the trees, you are falling back on your idea of illustration. It is an illustrative rendering of the form which is contradicting the movements which have already been suggested, but from this point it flows out here. You see it flows over the trees. It doesn't integrate with the trees. There is a little bit of it here, you see. There is a bit of movement there, but it is another kind of logic. These lines are arbitrary. These are kind of perspective lines. You see there is not anything in nature with those kind of parallel lines. It is quite impossible. Then these lines are not parallel, but they are like railway tracks going away and you never find that in nature either. So what I want is much more; a greater variety of line which, in its variety, will not contradict the horizon. This, again, is very generalized. The forms must have a more unique character. You must search for the form. Just as you found a form for the clouds, there must be a form here, through here, instead of that generalized block recognizable only by the anecdote of descriptive detail imposed upon it.

What I mean is, you have got three distinct blocks and three distinct attitudes. You have got a ploughed attitude, you have got a tree attitude and you have got your field attitude. In your field you have these kinds of lines. In the trees you have got a different kind of organization. You have got a very interesting movement up through there and you have another movement running up through here, but the three different systems are isolated. They are not completely integrated because they are just systems. You don't just let the form carry on. You make the form. You find a movement here for this form which could continue the movement in the sky. I mean you are looking at the sky, you are looking at the trees, you are looking at the fields and they are related. They are not parted up in the way you have parted them up. They are not like that and that like that and the sky like that. They are completely integrated because space is space. What we are dealing with are different space relations and we can not do this by splitting up three objects and three types of space into fields, trees and sky.

Do you know what a happening is? That is when a painter goes to the public and makes an event, a kind of circus act, which later on led to auto-destructive painting. This was led by one of my early colleagues called Gustaf Metzger and he made an event which became a work of art. It was self-destructive in that it wasn't aimed to last. An off-shoot of that is the environmentalists, people like Long, who make a circle of paving stones or make a path through the woods or that lunatic Christo. Do you know Christo? Well, Christo, for example, took over some large areas of land in California and put up thousands of umbrellas. He also wraps buildings and makes a package of them. Well, that is another off-shoot of this kind of happening. I think there is no point in it at all. I mean it is just that something happens. It has a certain logic and a certain decorative value, but I think all those things should have some kind of function and the function should be in relation to the environment and to the architecture. There should be some kind of ploy and some extension of the space relations of the architecture. During the 1950's there emerged big movements from America such as Tachism and Action Painting and Expressionism. Tachism was exemplified by Sam Francis. Tache means mark, which meant the emphasis was placed on the mark to such an extent that it became decorative and divorced from any direct references to the outside world. I use the Tache but I prefer to call it mark making. That is what drawing is; the making of marks in a certain order, in a certain logical sequence.

When Sam Francis went to Japan they put out the red carpet. He was greeted like a film star. What they didn't seem to realize was that he had taken this idea of the mark from Japanese and Chinese paintings; very simple expressive marks. Then the Japanese started imitating Sam Francis and it went round in a circle. We use that sort of thing in our decorations because it lends itself to that. It is very fundamental and this is why we think we got such an early success with our textile designs. We started right from scratch, from the beginning, in a very fundamental way working directly on the screens so that the forms grew out of the activity. You see, I am against all these damned 'isms' because I think they just treat a small portion, a small sector of the problem. We try to combine all these strategies. Making an event through activity - that I believe in, but it should lead to the creation of a unique image. The early Sam Francis paintings had a vitality and a movement and a rhythm. But the later works could just as well have been carpet designs.

Parallel with Tachism came Action Painting. The innovator was Jackson Pollock. The interesting thing for us in The Borough Group was that, like us, they began to consider the canvas as an area in which to act rather than a space in which to reproduce, design, analyze or express an actual or imagined object. Thus the canvas was no longer the medium for a picture so much as an event, so that out of the activity the image was born.

Jackson Pollock wasn't interested so much in the Tache. He was more interested in action. He took cans of paint, put his canvas on the floor and threw out the paint - just a throwing action. That is why he called it 'action painting' or, rather, he didn't name it; the critics did that. Critics love to name things. The problem is that the name obscures the real nature of the activity and becomes more important than the thing itself. Pollock was under the illusion that he worked from the gut, rather than from the eye. He was trying to be spontaneous and not have any analytical control through hand and eye. In this way he hoped to create a unique image through that kind of activity. But he failed. Of course, he might have produced something later. He died at the age of 46 in a car crash and so he was rather cut off early.

An interesting thing about Pollock is that what emerged was a highly decorative surface. To me it was a kind of glorified wallpaper; beautiful marks, beautiful surface but, although he tried to break away from the rendering of an image that had associations with an outside object, he nevertheless remained, in spite of all his spontaneous struggle, rooted within the western tradition. His compositions remained renaissance compositions. That is to say they have a focal point. It seems to have been done in an almost premeditated way, even to the extent that, when he had finished throwing his paint around, there are some paintings where he has put his hands on and concluded the composition by making some paint marks with his fingers. You can see the finger marks. So that was a very conscious act after the event.

I don't think Pollock fully understood what he was doing and the point was, with all the activity, he was still in the old academic tradition in terms of composition. He was able to put his hands on and complete the composition because he was then fully aware of the point that he had reached. I mean he was fooling himself with this gut activity. It was too controlled. But then, you see, it also had to do with his attitude to time, where he thought there should be endless repetition. This led to Andy Warhol whose ideas were anti-art. I mean he didn't believe in the created image. He used photographs and silk-screen with commercial techniques. He was proud that he didn't use his hands. He had a factory for producing art.

What Warhol and Pollock had in common was that they both believed in, and used, the repetitive act. Pollock's act was physical but Warhol's was mechanical. With Warhol you got endless Campbell soup cans. To me, the only relationship they had to art was that, once you

have seen a Warhol Campbell soup can, you will always see soup cans as Warhol soup cans. Then you are looking at life through art.

This is the whole point - we take everything for granted. I mean, when you asked that question this morning about getting away from the mundane everyday way of looking at objects, that is the whole point. We see them and we accept them but we don't really look. We don't look with any understanding and without any understanding you cannot make an image that is meaningful. When you look at a tree you should not say to yourself: "Ah, tree, ah leaves, and beyond is sky." You must look as though you had never seen the tree before and then you proceed to set down various lines and dots of colour which correspond in some way to what you think is out there. There is a story told about Courbet. A man observed Courbet painting a tree. He said to Courbet: "Are you painting that tree?" Courbet was surprised by the question and said: "What?" He said this several times and then finally he asked: "What do you mean, what tree?" The man indicated the tree and Courbet said "Oh, is that what it is?"

When you look at the tree you also see thousands of leaves. They all have the same character and yet each one is different. I mean, you could draw a leaf (a birch leaf or an oak leaf) but the point is that on the tree they are different sizes. They relate to each other in bunches. They move, the light moves and you move. So there are endless thousands of permutations and that is really what we should be interested in because that is life. That is how life goes on; in movement, in time, not static. But, you see, yesterday we were looking at this view with the trees and I said to you: "Look, you have got a bunch of leaves there and a bunch of leaves there, but what is interesting is the space." Then you isolated those two bunches of leaves so they became so important. But they had no importance unless they were related to the whole movement of light that moves through them.

What we were talking about was drawing the spaces in order to find the form. If we reverse the process of looking, that is not looking at a thing but rather looking at the space relations, then we arrive at the form. But the form doesn't have a precise edge. The edge is in continual flux because of the changes in the light and because of the other movements which we have talked about. So we must recognize that there are no lines and no edges in nature. That is why Cezanne made all those tiny little marks because he was unable, or reluctant, to find any final edge to a form.

To get back to this question of looking at things and divesting everything of the trappings of everyday activity – this explains why, although you have been painting all day, you still end up with a banal image. It is because you are standing on the earth, with your sense of gravity, looking at things which you accept every day without question. The result is that you have a banal image. This is why the Cubists would often turn a painting upside down and change it into another subject. They recognized that there was lots of activity on the canvas and that there were a lot of related lines and colours, but, when viewed in an everyday way, this gave a banality of vision. However, when divested of the subject, the lines and colours themselves were of interest. So by turning it upside down and taking away the subject, you have then begun to re-organize the vitality which came out of the activity and you are able turn it into another subject.

What I have just said is that the subject is meaningless but, at the same time, the subject is vital. This is one of the big contradictions we have to face. If you look through history at all the crucifixions and if you look through the history of art at all the nudes, then what is the difference between them? After all a nude is a nude and a crucifixion is a crucifixion. The difference lies in the composition and in the content but the content is not the subject.

You should never be too conscious of what you actually do in front of the canvas because what you are really doing, through activity, is bringing an idea into consciousness through paint and experience. This relates to Tachism, Action Paintings and Happenings. For me, all of these should be combined in the activity. Why should I restrict myself to one narrow "ism" when I was using these processes years before they appeared in London? The whole process of painting is a question of selection and making decisions and, as you say, you have to start somewhere. So you put a mark down. But the kind of mark you put down needn't be strictly related to an actual edge or contour of an actual form. It might merely be a scaffold or a direction line or a space indicator.

About forty years ago I invented this phrase, 'the planned accident.' I meant that planning alone would never create a work of art. Neither can you create a work of art by sheer accident, for example, by flinging paint around in the manner of Jackson Pollock. But if you have a planned activity and take care of the accident, then a work of art happens. That is my way of making a 'happening'; quite unlike the happenings that pass for art today. So the work of art happens. It is an event. It is an event which takes place on the canvas.

Then one is selecting and making marks. But the mark that you put down on the canvas need not - and, in fact, mostly should not - correspond to an actual mark out there in nature. It can be a rhythmic mark. It can be a virtual mark. It can be a mark which indicates space rather than the edge of anything. It can be a rhythm. I mean the result is you make a scaffold on which you build. But the final image might contain some of the scaffolding marks and then they are necessary because if they were taken away the image would collapse. Constructivism is the Russian development. In Sweden it was called Clear-Form and in America it was called Hard-Edge. In Sweden its biggest exponent was Olle Baertling. Sadly when he was shown in America some fifteen years later (after I had made the suggestion to curators and critics in London and Stockholm) - it was that much too late. He was then regarded by the critics as having imitated American Hard Edge, which was completely false because his roots were in Paris with August Herbin around 1920.

Talent by itself is nothing because it does not concern itself with ideas. If the person who was most talented could be the greatest artist then all the forgers in the world would be the greatest painters. But the fact is that a forger cannot make a work of art. When you first came here I told you that technique and talent were of little value and that you can have thousands of techniques but you should just use the technique that you need at the time. It was Einstein who said that he doesn't bother his head with simple mathematics when he can just reach for a book to see how it functions. Fill your head with techniques and you can spend your whole lifetime with techniques, but it doesn't help you to create.

The fact is we cannot see distance. Consider a baby who has no concept of space and will reach for the moon thinking he can take it. We can only know distance. That is, we know it through mathematics and through measure. We have measured it and so we know from experience that this is bigger and that is smaller and that when it is going away it becomes smaller; but if you had nothing to relate it to it wouldn't be smaller. We have no idea of 'near to' as against 'far away.' In this sense you could say that we have no idea of smallness as against bigness.

Now for years I told this to Torsten Renquist, the artist who brought me to Sweden, and he laughed at me because at that time, up until the middle 60's, he was a painter before he turned over to sculpture. Then, years later (after he had continued to laugh at me on the question of perspective and distance and not being able to see distance), he was with a friend when he was

taken over to Spitzbergen and dropped by a boat - while they were there they both painted - and two months later they were picked up and if they had not been picked up they would have died because of the cold. There were no houses, no trees, no people, but one day they met a hunter - I mean, they had been going there for several years - but, anyway, the hunter told them a story that proved my point that you can't see distance. The hunter saw what he thought was a large animal far away and he took aim and fired. It turned out to be a small bird not so far away. The illusion happened because he had nothing to compare it with. When the moon comes over the horizon it looks big and when it gets high in the sky it gets smaller. The reason for that I think is twofold. On the hand when the moon is just over the horizon there are atmospherics and humidity which produce an enlargement, but the main reason is that you relate it to houses, trees and everything else, whereas when it is up there you cannot relate it to anything.

One of the biggest problems while you paint is to know when to stop; to know when the image is finalized. Mostly you stop before completion but if you go over the point then you are already starting to create another image which conflicts with the first image. Now while you paint (if you are painting very well, that is to say, very engaged) you will be aware of sensations which are part of the creative act. I mean it is really what Cezanne termed his 'little sensation.' What I mean there, Steve, is that you have no way of telling whether you are working well or badly, that is to say, whether you are creating or merely going through the motions. So that if I say to you, "this is an interesting image," you must immediately think back over what you have been doing to arrive at that point, and try to remember the kind of feelings you had during that activity. If you go through this process for several years you begin to recognize that kind of feeling. It is rather like the feeling of falling in love which you cannot describe in words but you know what it is when you meet it. But like love, it is not a sort of happiness-creating event; it is also full of agony. Very often, as Collingwood once has said, the point where you stop at a painting is perhaps where you go for a cup of tea because, at that point, either you have to come to an end or you are too tired (or too bored) to proceed. When you come back to the painting it is often dangerous to start again because then you have another kind of energy, another mood and another approach, so that if, by any chance, what you have done previously is of value, then you will proceed to destroy it and turn it into another image. So, at that point, it is always best to take up another canvas.

When you first laid in this painting and I came along and said it is marvellous, why did I say it is marvellous? It is marvellous because it has a logic. It has a meaning through that logic. But when we come down to the legs in this full length portrait, then you are painting without logic. You have made a straight up and down form which contradicts the rest of the picture. It has no logical sequence. So the exercise is to bring it into direct relation with the logic of the upper part of the body. Now, the curious thing here is that, with my relationship to you as a student, we are now collaborating on creating the form and that collaboration can go on even as a group activity, but in the end one person is responsible for the final idea. The reason why this is good is because, as you said, you were just laying it in. You laid it in without thought and without a critical attitude. You thought to come back to it and re-organize it, but the point is that your sense of design was operating and there is a rightness about it. But because you don't recognize the image, whereas I recognize it, then really it becomes my idea simply because you would not have recognized that idea and, having given birth to it, allowed it to live. You would proceed as you have done and destroy the image in favour of a banal combination of forms which are more recognizable and therefore more acceptable. You like what you know.

This is why Picasso, when he took up a child's drawing, or a drawing by the milkman, he signed it and then said that this was his own. Because he stood for it, he was responsible for it. He recognized an idea which the person who created it didn't. So that in this limited sense, Picasso performed a creative act by signing the picture because the signature stood for the idea and he was responsible for the idea.

What I am saying is that painting by itself is a ridiculous activity. You are just laying down colours and those colours are abstract in relation one to the other so that you have to deal with that abstraction and bring the abstraction into a reality. That is only done by the logic of the related forms. What I mean when I say that painting is a ridiculous activity is that it is absurd. It has to do with mystery. One is dealing with lines, colours and forms. One is performing on the canvas; it is an event. The activity activates subconsciously your design sense which operates with a certain logic and brings the idea into consciousness. When I say that this area is good that is to say it has a logical consequence. In recognizing this, it becomes my idea. The problem is for you to believe me and continue the lower part of the picture (which, at the moment, is a banality in contradiction to the logic of the upper part) and your job is to bring it to a finality. A line is abstract. A colour is abstract. A form made by those lines and colours is abstract. The problem is to bring it into reality through the logical sequence - through the inter-relation of colours and lines - creating a logical space relation which gives meaning; a meaning which cannot be spoken about. As Bomberg said about his relationships with students: "What is revealed is not what the master has shown, but rather what he feels but cannot speak about." Also Bomberg once wrote that: "The modern artist, to be modern, must be very unmodern and must go completely unconsciously and not know what or why or where he is going."

If, as you were doing yesterday, you created a symphony of blue, blue and blue, there is absolutely nothing wrong with that. It is one form of discipline; the discipline being that you keep within the blue range and the freedom it gives you is that you are freed from the worry of introducing other colours. You know the whole business in painting is this swing from the discipline to a freedom and you cannot have the freedom without the discipline and vice versa. What I would suggest with this - as you have got such a conglomeration of brush strokes which are rather equal in tone, lacking in design and weak in composition which is the basic element of drawing - I would suggest that you wash it off. From the point where you started with a symphony of blue, during the whole day's work, various images have been built up, so that you ended with this banal image. But, if you wash off you will uncover the earlier workings and the residue of the earlier images will be revealed. Even if there is no finality to the image that is revealed, it will nevertheless be a stimulus, because the image will invariably have more vitality, and will therefore be a jumping off point to re-start the activity. Bomberg always advocated that it was just as important to wash off as it was to put on. It is the same activity revealing the form, but in reverse. He was, of course, dismissed from his job as teacher at Dagenham School of Art for advocating this blasphemy and the use of rags instead of brushes.

You see what you have on this canvas is a lot similar paint strokes which, in the end, look like a lot of soap-suds. There is no contrast. There is no drawing. There is no design. But the head is more concentrated and obviously worked much longer. There is an interesting image about to emerge, but what I want to stress is that you should draw, draw and draw, design and design, which means that you compose and in composing you find an image and that image will say something. It will communicate and then it will be meaningful. But what I want you to do in the drawing is to lose yourself. Become unaware of your paint strokes because you must be completely unconscious and blind to what you are actually doing so that, in the end, the result will surprise you.

A created image is unique in itself and in making a portrait one shouldn't be concentrating on making a likeness. It is like what Coleridge said once about poetry - that you make a likeness in the unlikeness. I mean you make a unique image but that unique image cannot be compared with the everyday way of looking or experiencing reality, which is mostly banal. When I say the likeness doesn't matter, what matters is the kind of form, the kind of image made and the content of that image - what it is actually saying to you. But, at the same time, the subject is all important because that is the catalyst, the driving force, the starting point and the point which starts your interest. The contradiction is that, although you say, "ah, there's something to paint," what you first experience is not what you actually paint, because you cannot paint an experience. It starts off the activity and then you experience while you paint through the activity. So by the time you have finished painting, your experience of the subject or the object has totally changed. You have found something out.

We were talking yesterday about moral values in art with reference to that line through history which was taken up by the Academies and, especially in England, provided a talking point for teachers; beginning with Raphael, Leonardo da Vinci, and continuing through Ingres, David, and MESSONIER. A more rewarding route started with Giotto, Masaccio, Michelangelo, Uccello, Piero della Francesca, Van Eyck, Goya, Rembrandt, Velasquez, and (most significant of all) the stream from Turner to Delacroix, Van Gogh, Monet, and the Father of the so-called Modern Art, Cezanne.

As far as I know, no other critic or art historian except John Berger has correctly assessed the relationship in the history of oil painting between what he termed its 'tradition' and its 'masters.' To quote Berger: "Certain exceptional artists in exceptional circumstances broke free of the norms of tradition and produced work that was diametrically opposed to its values. Yet these artists are acclaimed as the tradition's supreme representatives; a claim which is made easier by the fact that after their death, the tradition closed around their work, incorporating minor technical innovations, and continuing as though nothing of principle had been disturbed." Opposition in England to the academic during the sixties came about through people like Victor Paskmore who lifted his ideas from the Bauhaus. This resulted in yet another academic approach, plus an equality of endeavour, an equality of intention and an equality of purpose. It was a mixture of architecture, furniture design, textile, decoration and what have you, which resulted in an attitude to a total environment which, although exciting at the time, was in my view no base to proceed from. This approach didn't take into account spiritual values or belief, or any thought of art as idea giving meaning and communicating. They worked through ideas of time and space, or rather concepts of time and space, instead of the experience of time and space. Their compositions were in two dimensions which appealed only to a sense of pattern. They neglected the cube, the third dimension, and worked only with the surface and the anecdote. In my view every mark should break the surface, so that space begins to operate in the way Bernhard Berenson has termed "space-composition." To quote Berenson (*Italian Painters of the Renaissance*, Oxford University Press, 1938, pp.198-199).

Space-composition differs from ordinary composition in the first place most obviously in that it is not an arrangement to be judged as extending only laterally, or up and down on a flat surface, but as extending inwards in depth as well. It is composition in three dimensions, and not in two, in the cube, not merely on the surface. And, though less obviously, space-composition differs even more widely from ordinary composition in its effect. The latter, reduced to its elements, plays only on our feeling for pattern - itself a

compound of direct optical sensations and their mental consequences, of faint impressions of balance, and fainter ideated movements. Space-composition is much more potent. Producing as it does immediate effects ... on the vaso-motor system, with every change of space we suffer on the instant a change in our circulation and our breathing - a change which we become aware of as a feeling of heightened or lowered vitality. The direct effect, then, of space-composition is not only almost as powerful as that of music, but is brought about in much the same way ...

A painting that represents architecture is intrinsically no more a space-composition than any other picture. This art comes into existence only when we get a sense of space not as a void, as something merely negative, such as we customarily have, but, on the contrary, as something very positive and definite, able to confirm our consciousness of being, to heighten our feeling of vitality. Space-composition is the art which humanizes the void, making of it an enclosed Eden, a domed mansion wherein our higher selves find at last an abode, not only as comforting, as measured to our every-day needs, as homes of the happier among us, but as transporting, as exalting as are those things only which build up the ideal life. Near as it is to music in the form of great architecture, space-composition is even more musical in painting; for here there is less of the tyranny of mere masses of material, and their inexorable suggestions of weight and support ...

Space-composition in painting, then, is not the upstart rival of architecture, but its lovelier sister ... And it produces its effects by totally different means. Architecture closes in and imprisons space, is largely an affair of interiors. Painted space-composition opens out the space it frames in, puts boundaries only ideal to the roof of heaven.

But, Steve, you should never strive for beauty and harmony. There is a small element of beauty in all art, but beauty is not the meaning or the purpose. Painting comes about through a fight, through a struggle and through a lot of phases of activity and movement. The act and the actual movement in reality becomes virtual movement in a painting. In the completion of the painting there is suddenly a stillness. The image exists in one moment of time, but the movements are still there, essential to the structure. After the battle, in the stillness, there is beauty.

I am reminded of when Dubuffet first came to London after the war and everybody got so excited. They thought here was something brutal, in contrast to the charming confectionery of French painting and to the tonal renderings of impressionism which were emanating from the Camden Town School and the Euston Road group at that time. Dubuffet worked with very thick paint. This was made thicker by adding sand which also gave texture. He then scratched into it, imitating the graffiti from lavatory walls and children's idioms, and everybody revelled in the brutality of the paint and the subject matter. It was called 'L'Art Brut' but I couldn't find any brutality in it. All I could see was a beautiful surface scratched into.

Have you heard of an artist called Montecelli? You see when I showed in Stockholm there was one critic who said that the way I painted reminded him of Montecelli - or rather, it was the whole group, which included myself, Creffield, Richmond and Mead. I had never heard of Montecelli at that time. It was some twenty-five years later when I understood who he was and I was surprised to discover that Van Gogh had rated him so highly. In *The Letters of Vincent Van Gogh* (Fontana Library, London, 1963, p.277) edited by Mark Roskill, we have a quote from Van Gogh: "What a mistake that Parisiennes have not acquired a palate for crude things, for Montecelli's, for earthenware ... It is only that what I learnt in Paris is leaving me and that I am

returning to the ideas I had in the country before I knew the Impressionists."

You see, he was painting with other ideas before he met the Impressionists and he was only influenced by them for a while. Then he turned away, just exactly as Monet himself did after 1890. But to continue the quote: "And I should not be surprised if the Impressionists soon found fault with my way of working, for it has been fertilized by the ideas of Delacroix rather than by theirs. Because, instead of trying to reproduce exactly what I have before my eyes, I use colour more arbitrarily so as to express myself forcibly." Now here is that quote from Cezanne which we referred to (as recorded by J. Gasquet).

You see, a motif is this ... (he put his hands together ... drew them apart, the ten fingers open, then slowly, very slowly brought them together again, clasped them, squeezed them tightly, meshing them) ... that's what one should try to achieve ... If one hand is held too high or too low, it won't work. Not a single link should be too slack, leaving a hole through which the emotion, the light, the truth can escape. You must understand that I work on the whole canvas, on everything at once. With one impulse, with undivided faith, I approach all the bits and pieces ...

Everything we see falls apart, vanishes, that appears to us, lasts. Our art must render the thrill of her permanence along with her elements, the appearance of all her changes. It must give us a taste of her eternity. What is there underneath? Maybe nothing. Maybe everything. Everything you understand! So I bring together her wandering hands ... I take something at right, something at left, here, there, everywhere, her tones, her colours, her nuances, I set them down, I bring them together ... They form lines. They become objects, rocks, trees, without my planning. They take on volume, value. If these volumes, these values, correspond on my canvas, in my sensibility, to the planes, to the spots which I have, which are there before our eyes, then my canvas has brought its hands together. It does not waver. The hands have been joined neither too high nor too low. My canvas is true, compact, full ... But if there is the slightest distraction, if I fail just a little bit, above all if I interpret too much one day, if today I am carried away by a theory which runs counter to that of yesterday, if I think while I paint, if I meddle, whoosh! ... everything goes to pieces ... The artist is no more than a receptacle for sensations, a brain, a recording apparatus ... But if it interferes, if it dares, feeble apparatus that it is, to deliberately intervene in what it should be translating, its own pettiness gets into the picture. The work becomes inferior ...

Art is a harmony parallel to nature. What can one say to the fools who tell us: the artist is always inferior to nature? He is parallel to her. Provided, of course, he does not intervene deliberately. His only aspiration must be to silence. He must stifle within himself the voices of prejudice, he must forget, always forget, establish silence, be a perfect echo. Then the landscape will inscribe itself on his sensitive tablet. In order to record it on the canvas, to externalize it, his craft will have to be appealed to, but a respectful craft which also must be ready only to obey, to translate unconsciously - so well it knows its language - the text it is deciphering, the two parallel texts, nature as seen, nature as felt, the one that is there ... (he points to a green and blue plain), the one that is here ... (he tapped his forehead), both of which must merge in order to endure, to live a life half human, half divine, the life of art, listen to me ... the life of God.

What Cezanne means by this is that one should not let the analytical thoughts intrude. That is, don't be distracted by those signs and symbols of everyday life (the kind of seeing that we use, seeing through action - action here being merely an activity for survival - by which we

make sure that we see enough to survive). What Cezanne means is that we lapse into that survival activity which imposes itself on the creative act and cancels it out. We are really talking about the twin evils of knowledge and that kind of seeing which enables us to walk about without bumping into objects (or to recognize that a house has one door and four windows and one chimney pot).

It is a result of our education, the way we were brought up, that we acquire enough ways of seeing in order to operate in our lives. This becomes habit and habit cuts across any research, any new ideas or any new way of looking at the world. And when we say 'look' as opposed to 'seeing,' to look means to care, as well, about what you look at; to understand and to bring understanding into the act of seeing.

You can be sure, in criticism, that if there is anything that sticks out on a painting it must be wrong, whether it is one corner of the painting or a few brush strokes or the kind of brush strokes that you make. If you are only conscious of the brush strokes, instead of brush strokes revealing the form, then it must be wrong. Many people say that a flourish of the brush stroke is indicative of expressiveness in the way that, say, De Kooning works. I cannot see why a flourish of a brush stroke should be more expressive than any other kind of brush stroke. Brush strokes are not expressive or meaningful unless they are related to, and defining, a form. The gesture remains a gesture. This is the weakness of Auerbach's fireworks which are no more than gestures superimposed on his academic portraits. He dances around and makes a lot of fireworks over the portrait. They are purely decorative marks which superficially excite people and, when you look through the marks to the form, you find a very academic form. This is totally different to Lundquist or to Bomberg in his last self-portrait or the portraits that preceded that, where there is a complete integration of the marks and the form - a total idea. You see, that is what I have got against Nolde and Kokoschka. It is not decorative but you are very much aware of the brush strokes and they are stirred up like a porridge. There is a fuzziness; there is no clarity.

A characteristic of Auerbach, when he talks about painting, is that he always talks about honesty (rather like Maggie Thatcher) - honesty with a capital H - and you can be sure that when people talk about honesty they are usually quite the opposite - rather foxy types. No artist is wholly honest, as Collingwood pointed out. I prefer to strive for the authentic. If we analyze the word "good" in terms of "better," so we must analyze the word "true" in terms of "more true, less false or possessing more depth of insight." One can say that the activity of art is a distinctive way in which truth comes into being. Heidigger has said that art contains one of the ways in which truth reveals itself to us - a truth not the truth. Nietzsche was inclined to draw the conclusion that there could be no such thing as the Truth. All perception involves the formation of a judgment. You cannot say categorically in terms of philosophy or in terms of painting that this is true and that is not true.

Roger Fry said something like this, that biologically speaking art is a blasphemy. This is Fry, a beautiful piece which I can quote for you: "The art of painting says the eminent authority ... is the art of imitating solid objects upon a flat surface by means of pigment." We were given our eyes to see things, not to look at them. Life takes care that we all learn the lesson thoroughly so that, at a very early age, we have acquired a very considerable ignorance of visual appearances. We have learnt the meaningful life of appearances so that we understand them, as it were, in shorthand. This is similar to what I said earlier; that we learn to see objects in order to avoid bumping into them so that, by seeing, we are always dealing with an actual or a real space. But, in art, we are dealing with virtual space. We are asking questions about the object:

"What is it? Who am I? Where are we going? What for?"

Wittgenstein talks about facts and he says that facts are located in logical space in the way that material objects are located in physical space. This is what I meant when I talked about different levels of logic and, when I criticize a painting, I look for the logic. It must have a logical sequence. Wittgenstein also said that philosophy is not a body of doctrine but an activity and that, of course, is similar to the kind of activity that I am advocating. It is not action towards knowledge and not action for survival, but an activity which is a part of the search for truth. You see, it is very difficult to get people out of this rut because the banal way of looking, or rather seeing, is the way people operate in actual space. This banal way of seeing gives them security in the sense that that is what they are used to. They don't want to get out of that way of seeing because then they become very uncomfortable and nervous. This is why art is always dangerous to governments and to people. It is dangerous in the sense that it leaves them feeling insecure. People don't want to make the effort of understanding.

On the question of depression, it is the same with myself as it was with Bomberg. This is an important point (that the critic, Richard Cork, never understood when he referred to the agony in Bomberg's last self-portrait) - that under depression the ego and the will are less operative and it is just at that point that one comes face to face with the basic reality and one makes one's best work. The analytical side of the brain and the ego are not operative because they have been dampened by the depression.

Some of your problems, Steve, are that you are very talented and very clever, but the talent doesn't actually help you. It is a hindrance in many ways. And then, with your previous courses in illustration and graphics at Norwich, your way of seeing was fixed in terms of illustration; that is, with the known symbol instead of with a search for the image that is to be found.

I would like to refer back to our conversation about the beautiful in art. This is really the difference between craft and a work of art. A product of craft must always be beautiful whereas art is concerned with ideas. A work of art may contain an element of beauty, which can generate a feeling of happiness, but this is not the purpose or the function of art. Art, like life, is a mixture and a conglomeration of sensation, whereas a craftsman who produces a pot or a chair is producing an object, which gives satisfaction to the viewer or the user. This kind of satisfaction is a direct sensation which is uncluttered by meaning. A painting arises out of contrasts; contrasts of colour, contrasts of line, contrasts of form, contrasts of rhythm and direction. But in an object made by craft there is no contrast. It doesn't contrast with itself. It can only contrast with other things outside itself. As Roger Fry once said: "There is no excuse for a china pot being ugly, there is every reason why a Rembrandt and a Degas picture should be, from the purely sensual point of view, supremely and magnificently ugly."

In the work of art, contrasts give tension and vitality and it is through the contrasts that the form is revealed. Then it is necessary for the complicated space created by the marks on the canvas to be enclosed by a frame, in order to protect the idea from the environment.

On the other hand, the marks that make up a flat surface design create a simple limited space and it is intended that they should work out into the architectural space. In a decoration we have a more complicated space, but it is not enclosed by a frame and it is not made to hang as a meaningful image on the wall like a painting which is a work of art. And so, the virtual space created by the decoration interacts with the actual architectural space; it is related to and

married to its environment. Architecture can be said to be an object enclosing a space and the decoration functions because it interacts with that space. It not only embellishes but also enlarges the architectural space.

There are three ways of doing art, but only one of them can be really called art. There is design and decoration, which are really the by-products of art. Then there is 'art proper' which is when the object made is not of paramount importance but is merely the vehicle or the scaffold for an idea. The object or image communicates something other than itself. It is a means and a form of communication. Therefore, it is concerned with problems and it creates problems. It is also moral because it forces one to make decisions. In fact art is really decision-making and it is in this respect that it is very like religion or philosophy. The problematic and moral character of art is possibly the reason why most people don't like it. The artist can be likened to the respectable housewife. Marriage is a difficult institution, but it is also meaningful. Out of the problems and the difficulties the artist, like the house-wife, makes a very real contribution to our culture.

Art as design or decoration is when the so-called art is no longer concerned with ideas but is a by-product performing a specific function. The activity is undertaken for a particular purpose and it must work; that is, it does its job. But it is no more than what it is. It is an object and has no meaning other than as an object placed in a situation. It is meant to be appreciated and it has a direct impact on the senses. We appreciate the decoration in the same way that we appreciate a flower or a young girl, a sunset or a cocktail. So, in this situation, the artist no longer works as a respectable housewife but rather as a prostitute. That is to say the artist works to order to give pleasure for money. On my fiftieth birthday the Swedish art critic Bernt Eklundh wrote about me in this way: "When Cliff does the job well, even a little love creeps in also." At first I was rather shocked by this statement but, on reflection, I had to agree that love is the extra ingredient that one gives, which the client does not ask for and is probably unaware of. It is the spiritual content which makes the work endure.

Now let us consider again the question of the subject in painting (by which I mean the subject as distinct from the content or the idea). I have said before that the subject is not at all important. But, on the other hand, it is important as a starting off point; as a stimulant and as a point of engagement. There is ample proof in the history of art that subject was of no importance, but merely an excuse for painting. We can think of endless crucifixions, depositions, entombments and pietas where all that they have in common is the name of the subject. Then there is the vexed question of 'copying'. The fact is that, if one copies a subject of an old master, one is not imitating or even translating. One is not copying any more than one copies a tree in nature. The activity of copying is not even a paraphrase because to copy authentically one would need to know the state of mind and feelings of the artist. Therefore to copy, as copying, produces only a pale surface imitation.

It is useful at this point to compare Caravaggio's 'The Entombment of Christ' with the copies made by Rubens and with Gericault's version over two hundred years later and, finally, with Cezanne's watercolour of the same subject.

It will help us to deal with this question of copying the subject (and also the question of the difference between illustration and what I call 'painting proper') if we examine Gustave Dore's wood engraving of the Prison Courtyard which was copied by Van Gogh in paint. What we see in the Dore is all the details of bricks and flagstones and faces of the prisoners and their clothes; all the details coming together to make the subject recognizable. Van Gogh copies the subject exactly. That is to say, he doesn't add anything or take away anything. We can count the number of figures, for example. But when it comes to the treatment of the figures in relation to

the flagstones and the treatment of the bricks on the walls, he is not at all concerned with detail. Instead, through his design sense, he constructs a picture which incorporates the figures and the flagstone, a movement of light, an organic rhythm and the structure throughout the whole composition.

Van Gogh also made some twenty-eight pictures after Millet whom, of course, he admired greatly. But when we look at an etching of Millet called 'The Reaper' and compare it with Van Gogh's copy of that etching in 1889, we see again that, although Millet's forms are interesting, the interest is only of generalized detail. The composition is split up between the ground and figure, and the figure and the corn, the corn and the sky and a few marks suggesting a flight of birds.

When we look at the Van Gogh, we see a much more generous handling of the drawing, a greater sense of design, a complete integration of the figure with the ground and the corn, the sky and the birds and the most extraordinary display of brush strokes where the heads of corn gradually materialize into bird form. No part is given precedence over any other part. There is a total integration and, of course, the interesting fact is that the quite unformed ideas of insignificant or third-rate paintings can spark off a painter into an activity which creates a master-piece. Van Gogh was not alone. For example, in Toledo one can find in Greco's studio very insignificant paintings that were a major influence on him. Turner copied other artists' etchings and sometimes used them as a base. And then there was Picasso with his renderings of other masters.

Even a painter like Keith Vaughan has remarked that good ideas seldom make the best paintings (they are too good as ideas) whereas unformed ideas are best, because they grow up and take shape in the process of painting and are therefore inseparable from it. And even Vaughan realized that it would be more accurate to talk of sensations rather than ideas, because the idea is usually only apparent when the work is finished.

The sensation is what matters and this confirms what I mean about copying. Whether it is copying from an old master subject or from a tree or from a nude, it is not the act of copying that matters; it is the sensation derived from the subject. But the sensation only defines itself through our experience, during the work in front of the subject, and no amount of detailed description of the parts will approximate to the reality. The sum of the parts can never make a whole. Reality does not consist of a set of marks which are signs for objects. As we have seen in the Van Gogh copy of the etching by Millet, his marks were so abstract that the marks indicating ears of corn very quickly turned into birds in flight. One had to read the marks in relation to the whole, which is the opposite way round the way that illustration functions.

On the question of subject as idea in art, I think it was Rene Huyghe who remarked, when discussing Delacroix, that the painter's task is not to first conceive an idea and then illustrate it with an image recognizable by its realism - this is the trap into which it is so easy for the painter to fall.

The fact is, Steve, that there is very little that can be taught in art. All the teacher can do is to stimulate and point a direction during the act and develop the student's critique, to help you criticize your own work and to know when you have actually made a creation. The creative potential of people is always far ahead of the development of the critical faculty. All I can do is to help you develop your feelings (to be aware of your little sensation) instead of merely seeing and thinking; to help you to know when to stop. That is the most difficult. And don't be afraid of the word 'genius.' It is a very over-rated word. Genius is really a small amount of talent plus a large amount of hard work applied in a specific direction. I only ask you to trust me and to

believe in what I say. If I say a thing is good or bad, you must believe that and then try to find out why I said it. Or, better still, to find out why it is good or bad yourself. I don't like to use the word 'good' or 'bad.' What we should ask is whether it is a created work of art or not. As Bomberg used to say, it usually takes twenty years to develop some kind of critique on your own without help from the master. But, as an artist, you are learning and discovering all your life. You are always the student. You must never stop being curious, never stop doubting. Always ask: "Why?" Always be ready to accept a new idea. Of course, that is the most difficult problem; to recognize a new idea, because how can you recognize something that is new, which you have never seen before and never experienced before?

So we come back to that question of recognizing the kind of sensation (the kind of feeling) you had during the moment of creation. I can't describe that feeling; it would like trying to describe an orgasm. Therefore, we are concerned with cultivating the ability to recognize the kind of sensation that is creative; not to recognize necessarily the object created, but the sensation that produced the object, so that one develops not so much a critique as an awareness of sensation.

Previously I have talked very much about virtual lines and the scaffolding which supports the form and indicates the entities. The entities may not be so important in themselves. That is to say, the colour that fills the entities only serves to hold the directional lines apart. These lines give direction and direction gives tension and the tension gives movement. The movement gives volume and in the volume we find the mass. Painting is a kind of physical passion; it must be a passion because of the unceasing dedication required to become competent in its grammar. It is physical because the mere appearance and the intellectual attributes of things follow only after apprehension by all the other senses; sight merely corroborates the data and the intellect evaluates, classifies and gives it a name.

There is one very interesting thing in that. I don't want to demonstrate it and I don't want you to play about with it, although you can if you like. But if you set up a series of squares and you put in a colour and in the next one you put another colour and then another colour - then what happens is that although you know they are identical in size, the squares begin to look as if they were different sizes. That is one thing and the other thing is that one colour acts on another colour so that even the colour itself changes, because of the relationship and the inter-reaction. So if you think of that in terms of paint strokes you have thousands and thousands of permutations as one stroke lands against another stroke. That is what the Fauves were playing about with in those paintings I showed you by Matisse, Derain and Vlaminck.

You see, Cezanne has said when the colour reaches a richness then the form is complete - something of that sort. I have always said the opposite; that when the drawing is complete, then the colour has a richness. The form is created by the colour but only through the structure. The structure holds the colour. But, you see, what is curious is the fact that the old masters were conditioned, not only by their theories and by one influencing another, but also by the kind of colours that were available. I mean today we have unbelievable chances and opportunities because there are so many colours compared with the kind that the old masters had available. And when you come to more modern times you have whole theories about tone. I mean if you look at Sickert with his tonal range - if you look at the Camden Town School and the Euston Road group - they all had their tonal theories. Then, if we look at the kind of things you have produced in the last days, you also have a tonal range. You can ask yourself why you stick to this tonal range. It isn't based on any particular theory, as far as I know from our talks, and so why work within this limited range?

You should think out why you do anything before the act of painting and, while you are painting, you shouldn't think at all. Again, as Cezanne said, when the thought comes everything collapses. When you actually paint, let your mind go blank. And as Bomberg said at one point, try to be blind as well and just act. You make the decision to put out certain colours on the palette. Then every time you take a brush stroke you make a decision to mix that colour with that colour, or not to mix at all, and you put it down on the canvas, relating one brush stroke to another. I mean they are all decisions and that is what it is all about. You are a decision maker and that is why painting is so difficult, because every second you have to make decisions which are crucial to the building of the form.

What I am really saying is that the kind of decisions you made in those two paintings don't relate to any specific movement in history and they don't relate to a so-called naturalism. Even though the background there is yellow and you have used yellow tones, it is not the exact tone of the background; it is something else so that it is a kind of halfway stage between what is called reality - what is out there - and what, in fact, you are projecting.

But Steve, we have talked about this kind of mannerism that you have developed and I have said several times: "Draw with colour." You can draw with one colour and then, when you need to make a contrast, you take another colour. Then either you increase the strength of one colour against the other - dark against light, light against dark - or you can take another colour which shows up against that colour. And, every time the form changes, you are forced to change the colour. So we come to that point, as I said, where when the drawing is right the colour is right, but it is all based on drawing.

We speak of colours in the sense of saying 'pure white,' but if we place a piece of white paper against snow, then the paper will appear grey (although, for ordinary purposes, one would call it white and not light grey). And we can speak of 'dark blue' or 'light blue,' 'dark red' or 'light red,' but when we come to yellow, we never say 'dark yellow.' Why not? In a similar way, of course, we can say 'dark brown' but we would never think of saying 'dark white.' We say 'deep black' but we never say 'deep white.' Why not?

Then, of course, there is the question of similarities of colour and their different use. For example, gold isn't yellow, but yellow in combination can have the appearance of gold. There is such a thing as gold paint, but Rembrandt didn't use it to paint a golden helmet. We can say quite definitely there is no such thing as the pure colour concept.

Let us consider Goethe's theory of colour which I have always hated as I have hated everything that has come out of it. If one agrees that Goethe correctly recognized the nature of colour then here nature does not mean a song of experiences with respect to colours. It is correct in relation to our concepts of colour. When one speaks of the character of a colour one is always thinking of just one particular way it is used.

In traffic lights, for example, with red, orange and green, the red is 'stop' meaning danger. But why the hell should red represent danger? It is just a convention. I mean, for example, black is said to be a death colour but it depends on where you live - in China white is a death colour. There is no real value for the painter in this conceptual use of colour. It is merely a reading of colour through symbolism or signs. It has nothing to do with forms or with sensation.

It is often said that red is aggressive and makes you nervous and it is also said that, in a picture, red comes forwards and blue goes backwards. Also, because we equate blue with the sky which is in the distance, they say that blue becomes distant when it is a colour used in a painting. But if you stare at the sky it can either go white or it can go black - that is, it can do

this without there being a change of light like in a sunset or a sunrise. In fact, by the way you manipulate the colours with the form, you can make a picture so that red goes back and blue comes forward. It is all a question of the relationship and the manipulation and the kind of form you make.

I don't suppose you have heard of the Rudolph Steiner colour theories? Rudolph Steiner was an Austrian who had a lot of dotty theories, but in Sweden, some distance outside Stockholm, there is a whole village built by Steiner according to his theories and, in fact, his interior decoration there was quite wonderful. There the theories begin to work, but in terms of painting it is absolute nonsense. I have had several students whose work was influenced by these theories, both those of Goethe and those of Steiner, and all their paintings turned out exactly the same - the same kind of colours and the same kind of forms - which to me is not art at all, but more like an illustration of dream fantasies.

I think I told you the other day about a friend of mine who is a doctor of mathematics and he used to laugh at me when I talked about colour theory and when I said that very little is really known because there has been very little research into colour. He said colour was of no consequence in the scheme of things and he drew a line about a metre long and then he pointed to a section in the middle of the line which was half an inch in length. He said that this section demonstrated what a small part of the electro-magnetic spectrum was concerned with colour. Therefore it was of no consequence really and nobody was bothered about it.

However there are some colour theories which purport to have an industrial and psychological application. For example, in hospitals they always paint the walls pale green; pale green being meant to be a soothing colour whereas reds, oranges and purples are supposed to over-excite the patient. This I think is absolute nonsense because it depends on the kind of colours you use and the juxtaposition of colours. We have done jobs in hospitals for the mentally handicapped where we have juxtaposed the most brilliant of colours and, as far as one can tell, there is no evidence that the patients have become more mentally disturbed as a result. At least we made the environment a bit more interesting and - well, interesting is about the only word to use as against boredom. I don't think there has been any convincing scientific analysis of people's reactions to colour. I think it was just an idea put about because green is what you are supposed to see when you look out on the green fields and the green trees. This gives a feeling of security because you feel safe. Because it is something that you know, therefore you have a feeling of tranquillity. That is true, but, if you weigh that as against the benefits of an interesting environment, then I don't think it stands up.

Now let's go back to that point, the quote from Van Gogh where he says; "Who will be the painter of the future who will do for the figure what Monet did for the landscape?" What is curious about this is that, at first sight, one thinks Van Gogh refers to the later work of Monet but, in fact, he is referring to his impressionist time and he is admiring Monet, not realizing that his own paintings are a thousand times better at that point. But, of course, he was full of self doubt which isn't a bad thing because to doubt is to question and to question is always positive - it leads to the creative process. (One example of an artist who didn't doubt is Augustus John. He was full of what he knew and how to do it.)

Van Gogh died in 1890 and it was at that point in 1890 that Monet began to change and go against all his earlier beliefs which he had shared with his colleagues, the Impressionists. In fact, Monet's later work (over 25 years) on the theme of the Water lilies was much closer both in execution and idea to Van Gogh. And the extraordinary thing is that this work went on parallel to the Fauves and the Cubists up to 1926.

What I would like to ask you, Steve, is what do you think criticism consists of? How do you make a critique of a work of art? The fact is I don't really like to talk in terms of good and bad in painting. I have said elsewhere that, like Oscar Wilde, I don't believe in the good and the bad; there is only art, so to speak, that is ideas of art and either they function or they don't function. In fact you cannot criticize a real work of art because it is beyond criticism in the sense that it is unique. You cannot compare one uniqueness with another uniqueness. To quote W. H. Auden from his book *The Dyer's Hand*: "A work of art is not good of a certain kind but a unique good so that, strictly speaking, no work of art is comparable to another." How do you know when a work is unique? Well, that is the big question; the big problem, part of the mystery of art. A clue is when the image surprises you, or revolts you and is, on first acquaintance, an idea which you find unacceptable. Preserve it and cherish it then, in time, with experience, you will begin to understand and to love what has come about.

You know it is unique because it is surprising. It is new. I don't like the word 'new' because there is nothing really new. Everything comes out of something else and everything is related. All ideas through art history are related but there are some which we regard as positive and others we regard as negative. In so far as all ideas are not the same, each idea is different and unique. But, on the general level of day to day criticism with master and student, what one is faced with most of the time is discussing attitudes to drawing, attitudes to space relations and whether the marks on the canvas begin to function towards that unique image. When you leave off a painting like that, at a point where you say, "I don't feel like painting today," that is a denial of the creative act - because very often with the feeling of not feeling or of not knowing what to do or if you feel sick (any of those attitudes which diminish the ego and the will) you can then allow the sense of design to operate and enter into the creative act.

You make the decision to put an apple on a table so then you begin to draw. But what you have drawn is that there is an apple; the apple is red and the surround is tonal. What we are talking about is drawing. What I have said frequently is that there is no point in painting so-called local colour because, as we said yesterday, the character of the colour depends on its location and environment and what it is used for. So we cannot necessarily say the character of the apple is red. The character of the apple depends on its form and its location in space; on its relation to the table, its relation to everything else, your attitude to it, the play of the light and all those things make up the reality.

The first contradiction here, Steve, is that the apple itself is the only piece of local colour which contradicts its surroundings and its location in space. But the green, the orange - and those greens - they are as important as the apple. And so this is part of the arrangement and part of the composition. But this here contradicts the local colour of the apple and it contradicts the drawing of the apple. Both the sides of your painted apple are equal; there is no variation. But what we are striving for are the things which are not equal which are the variations. Everything is different and everything changes in movement. Two equal curves do not make an apple. You see what you have here, Steve, on the background is an arrangement of colours. It is an arrangement of these circles. It is all going in circles which, in itself, is interesting. Do you see? But it has no relation to the reality of this tablecloth (or to the apple either) in the reality or in your painted image. It has two different systems operating; one, the object, and the other the background in which the object is placed.

I appreciate it is very difficult to forget that that is an apple sitting on a table and just approach it as an arrangement of shapes and colours which have nothing to do with the everyday activity in life. I think it was Bergson who said that activity is worse than knowledge

because activity is oriented towards doing something. What he meant was that with the usual way of seeing through activity then the activity enables you to get from A to B; it's useful in the process of living, and I agree with that. But, on the other hand, I can say the opposite which is that it is only through activity (it is only through being active) that you can create an image. Bergson is really referring to activity as a means of survival, but, in art, we are concerned with things of the spirit which have nothing to do with survival.

We come to the question of what is art for? If we are not making pictures in order to sell them for money but, instead, we are making art, what is it that we are doing? Why do we do it? And the answer to that can only be that we need to do it and the need is to explore our own souls, our own spirit, and in doing so we leave a residue which can be recognized by the public out there. The dialogue between the inner self and the outer so-called reality cannot be the same in every activity. There is a difference again between one activity and another and the use that is made of that activity.

I think it is great that you say that you approach this physically, but there is a certain blockage because you don't actually paint physically. You are still stuck with the hand and eye and the eye isn't telling you what is really out there because your knowledge is coming between the real looking. You are seeing but you are not looking - 'looking' requires that you look for meaning. You look to find out.

Hume quoting Bergson says that man's primary need is not knowledge but action. Actually I have always been against knowledge. If you say that you know what it is, you mean that you think you know what it is. This is knowledge breeding knowledge without any attempt on your part to see what is out there or to have any feeling about it. In fact, knowledge discounts feeling altogether. Bergson says the characteristics of the intellect are concerned with this. The function of the intellect is so to present things not that we may thoroughly understand them but that we may successfully act upon them. Every man is dominated by his necessity of action. I agree with Bergson up to a point, in terms of everyday life and activity, but the contradiction here is that I believe in action in art. I work through action, through activity, and it is only by activity that we can create a work of art. Most painters do without this physical activity. I am not saying that physical activity is just standing there with your brush in your hand and applying paint to canvas. What I am saying is that one acts with all the senses through movement - movement being activity. You project yourself over the landscape. It is like swimming over the landscape. You find a oneness with the landscape - with the reality. You are not only in it, you are it.

We are talking about feelings. We are talking about sensation. We are talking about Cezanne's "little sensation" (or, at least, what I think he meant by that). We are talking about Bomberg's idea of the "spirit in the mass." It doesn't matter what you see but how you see it. What I am saying is that through knowledge you see what you know. It is an intellectualization of the process of seeing and I am discounting - I am taking away - the idea of seeing and I say you shouldn't just see; you should look. To look means caring, commitment and understanding. When you look during everyday life, you do it mostly in order to get from point A to B and there is no understanding involved in that. There is no morality in moving from A to B. There is no caring involved and it isn't a moral action. I am trying to point out the difference between action and activity to do with mundane things of existence (of living and of physical survival) and action and activity in terms of the creative act.

Well, it is not quite the tangible and the intangible. That is not quite what we mean (like talking about the infinite and the finite) because we are really asking the question what is the tangible. If you speak of love as being intangible and the tangible as being whatever is out there which you can see and touch, then that is not quite what we are talking about. Yes, I agree that love is a set of sensations and emotions and feelings which are given a name, 'love.' I quoted somewhere, I think it was Ruskin (no, it was someone else I cannot remember) - we had it as a motto: "Work is Love made Visible."

On the question of likeness in a portrait, what I was objecting to in most of the portraits you made in the last days is the fact that, in striving for a likeness, you concentrated on different parts. You isolated the parts (of say, eyebrows, nose, mouth) and you weren't striving for a total image. You try to get the parts right, as you say, but you paint from the parts to the whole. Instead you should be painting from the whole to the parts. It is two totally different attitudes to painting. Lucien Freud, for example - he paints the parts even to the extent of painting hair which becomes an absurdity. You are still faced with this question of likeness where different photographs give different kinds of likeness and different painters faced with the same subject, as I said just now, come up with different likenesses. Then you ask yourself the question what is a likeness? What am I really doing when I strive for likeness? But out of a structure, when you strive to compose, to design, to draw, to throw up a scaffold and build on it, you inevitably come to create one kind of an idea of a likeness. You notice I didn't just say 'likeness' - I said 'an idea of a likeness.'

The rightness and wrongness of what you have painted is a question of logic - the logic of it. When I see something in your painting which cuts across what I perceive to be the logic, then I say there is a wrongness in it. It is not functioning according to the logic. But nobody can say whether a painting is right or wrong - that doesn't come into it at all. It is a question of whether it is an interesting image or whether it is a unique image and a unique image is what is always interesting. And, as I said earlier, you cannot judge it, so if it is impossible to judge an image it must be right. If it is new, if it is something created, if you have never seen it before, how can you make a judgment? What do you judge it against? So that brings us back to what I can do for you.

One point for you to understand is that I have more experience than you. Therefore I can say to you that this appears to be something unique. It may be something which you do not recognize and perhaps it even offends you. Or I can say this isn't unique because it is like this and it looks like that and it looks like something you have done before. Therefore go on working until, through the struggle, you produce an image which will surprise you. Because I have had those years of experience I can certainly recognize that here is something unique. Then I will tell you to stop and you must believe me when I can say this is worth preserving. Left to yourself you will go on painting over it until you come up with something you recognize which is bound to be a banal image and either an imitation of yourself or somebody else.

The great battle is to allow the senses to operate and they have to operate against all your upbringing, all your parents, teachers, friends and the whole educational system of the western world. It is not so much the way you are taught art when you are a child (when you break away from those wonderful childish drawings) as the effort you had to make in order to learn how to write. As a child learning to write, you were making precise marks which formed words and this made a connection between actually making those word marks and the meanings of the words, which has to do, then, with your knowledge of the world and your existence. This takes you into

that realm of activity which I spoke about earlier and which Bergson said was so totally wrong (in the terms of his aesthetics) because it was the kind of activity which aided your survival or existence. What you learnt was a practical activity; but this kind of activity has nothing to do with the senses. You see the world around you, in reality, by using the senses and not by means of the critical faculty. So when we talk about using the senses we come into the realm of mystery, which is really what art is all about.

As you said yourself earlier when you mentioned love, we know what love feels like and it can be happiness or it can be agony, but we still call it love. But we cannot name its ingredients. Nobody can know how the senses work. I mean they are - something happens. Despite the efforts of all the philosophers and all the psychoanalysts and all the scientists, nobody has come up with any idea of how the senses operate. We have them and we use them. All I am saying is that the analytical part of the brain and the critical faculty suppress the use of the senses so that we always favour a name, a word, a description or something we know in favour of something we might discover with the senses. The result is that we recognize the banal image as against the creative image which is the unique image. You cannot say it in words because painting is a non-verbal activity. If you could say it in words, then you wouldn't paint.

A painting idea is a painting idea and if you can describe it in words there is absolutely no point in painting it. And what you have just said means that ... well, you never know when the idea is expressed. This is the main difficulty and, as I said earlier, this is where I can help you, because I can recognize something that is unique. That is, I can recognize an idea against all the other exercises which are non-ideas and which are merely pastiches or imitations of somebody else or yourself. Painting is very similar to love and sex. With the activity of sex you know when you are coming up to an orgasm and you know what the orgasm is. This is rather like the idea in painting, but the trouble is that, in painting, you cannot recognize the idea you can only recognize the sensation that produced the idea. If you stop sexual activity before that point of orgasm is reached, it is unsatisfactory. If you go over the point, it is unsatisfactory. And it is exactly the same in painting. If you stop before the completion of the idea then you haven't reached that richness of colour. But if you go over the point you are already moving into the area of another idea which contradicts your first idea. As you go on, the conflict becomes greater so that, in the end, you haven't got an idea at all because the conflict cancels it out. So the whole strategy is to try to know when to stop.

Joseph's Questions

1. Bomberg's Teaching

- 1.1 I have heard you say that your association with David Bomberg was the decisive artistic influence on your career. Could you describe how this came about?
- 1.2 To go back a little, before you met Bomberg, you had already decided to paint?
- 1.3 You have described Bomberg as a teacher unlike any other. Why was that?
- 1.4 What were the philosophical ideas which most concerned you and your friends at that time?
- 1.5 How did Bomberg's own enthusiasms in art affect you and your fellow students?
- 1.6 Bomberg stressed drawing from the figure. Could you comment on this aspect of his teaching?
- 1.7 How were Bomberg's principles carried out in practice?
- 1.8 Was Bomberg's death an event which deeply affected you?
- 1.9 With which of your fellow students did you remain in close touch?
- 1.10 How do you view Bomberg's position in twentieth century art?

2. Aims and Ideals

- 2.1 You draw a sharp line between art and designing. Why?
- 2.2 How far have you fulfilled Bomberg's ideas, and how have you developed them?
- 2.3 Are the materials of painting important to you, or do you regard them more as means to your ends?
- 2.4 What arts, apart from painting, have given you inspiration?
- 2.5 Is the natural world a dictionary for you, as it was for Delacroix?
- 2.6 Have your tastes and preferences in art changed over the years?
- 2.7 The action of painting has a particular meaning for you. What is it?

3. Textiles and murals

- 3.1 Can you outline the way in which Marstrand Designers was formed?
- 3.2 How did changing conditions in the textile industry affect Marstrand Designers?
- 3.3 When did your commissions for buildings begin, and how did they develop?
- 3.4 You often work on textiles and panels for buildings. Do you like working in this way, and with which commissions have you been most pleased?
- 3.5 Your commissions on a large scale have required team work. How has this worked out?
- 3.6 Can you give an account of your well-known Volvo mural?
- 3.7 How did the commissions for work on ships begin?
- 3.8 Are there special problems for murals in ship interiors?
- 3.9 You have worked for various firms in different countries, and with a number of architects. Would you like to single out some particularly good working relationships?
- 3.10 Are there still some sorts of commissions which you would like to undertake, perhaps for an airport or a London Underground station?

4. Independent practice

- 4.1 Exhibiting in Sweden enabled you and your friends to see parallels in Swedish art to your own practice. Can you account for this affinity?
- 4.2 Marriage in Sweden resulted in your developing a combined career as a painter and designer. Was this difficult for you?
- 4.3 You used silk-screen in an original way as a print-maker. Could you explain this?
- 4.4 Your painting is represented in a number of major galleries, as well as private collections. Do you feel you would have benefited from more early recognition?
- 4.5 You have exhibited widely. Are there some exhibitions of which you have particularly good memories?
- 4.6 Living in Sweden has given you many friends. Would you like to single out a few important professional friends and allies?
- 4.7 Can you give some examples of how you have encouraged connections between British and Swedish art?

